SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 427. FOR WEEK ENDING MARCH 6TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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THE SHORT STORIES

No. 427. ONE PENNY.

For the Week ending March 6th, 1897.

THE COUNTESS OF CHARLTON'S PICTURE.

WE were feeling rather dull that evening, we three: the Man of Art, the Man of Town, and the Man of Writing, for our host, Macnaught, had been called away on business, the ladies had long since retired to rest, and we were thrown on our own resources.

We had finished our billiards, we had seen that our guns were in order for to-morrow's sport, we had discussed the articles in a certain magazine; and after doing all this we found that it was still too early for bed.

The Man of Art was gazing up at a picture of Macnaught's that hung over the mantelpiece; I was thinking of many things, while Hawtree, the Man of Town, was thinking of us, and wondering whether we should appreciate the choice piece of scandal that was on the tip of his tongue.

Suddenly the artist, with an inarticulate cry, sprang from his chair, and began eagerly to examine with a glass the great picture that hung above our heads—a picture, it was said, unearthed in the ruins of an ancient town, painted by hands long since turned to dust—a unique relic of a bygone era in art of which historians could find no trace.

"By Joye," he cried, "this is no copy. This is the original, the *original*, a priceless gem worth twice as much as the rest of the Macnaught treasures put together. I say, Hawtree, I thought the Countess of Charlton had the picture in her town house. How in the world does it come to be down here? There is some mystery about this, say I, and you have got to explain it."

Hawtree was a man of whom it had been said that he knew more about the history of all the important people of London than they knew themselves. He had a remarkable insight into other people's affairs. He was, in fact, a kind of living repository for family secrets. Nevertheless, I felt doubtful whether he would be able to unravel the mystery that surrounded Macnaught's picture.

"It is all a great secret," he said, "about which I am safe in saying that only three living people know anything. However, as Macnaught is not here, and the story won't penetrate beyond this room, I'll let you have it."

Hawtree swung his feet on to the mantelpiece, and sank deep down into his chair, so that only his nose was visible, and began to talk in his usual deep and impressive voice. And I made my notes as he spoke without fear of detection.

Edited By C. Arthur Pearson

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"You must know, then, that this picture," said he, waving his hand to the mantelpiece, "is a priceless work of art that is as unique as it is valuable. It is impossible to say whose hand laid those marvellous colours. It is impossible, too, to say at what date the picture was painted, or for whose pleasure it was designed. Its whole history is wrapped in mystery. All that is known for certain is that it was discovered some three or four hundred years ago beneath the ruins of an ancient town, and that when it was brought to light it nearly caused a world-wide war on the question of its ownership. An English general, however, succeeded in gaining possession of it by a skilful strategy, and immediately packed it off to his family at home, with whom it has remained until it fell into the hands of our friend Macnaught."

Having finished this magnificent, if somewhat vague peroration, Hawtree looked round suddenly, barely giving me time to drop my note-book to the floor, and to disguise with a quick cough the quiet chuckle on which I had ventured.

When he had satisfied himself that I was giving him my whole attention, and that the artist was doing the same, he again buried himself in the recesses of his chair, while I stealthily reached out for my note-book and continued taking down his words as he gave utterance to them.

"It was an original notion of our friend Macnaught to make a collection, as he called it, of the unique works of art of the world. Money is a quick worker and it was not long before Macnaught found himself in possession of many treasures of which there were no duplicates in existence. Thus, that picture to the left was painted by a French artist, whose name, unfortunately, has escaped me. A genuine work of art, is it not? No sooner was it hung at the Salon, than Paris was at the man's feet, dealers were clamouring for his work, and he was generally considered the coming artist of the century. A day later he committed suicide, leaving his immortal masterpiece behind him. Macnaught immediately bought it. Again, that picture on the opposite wall is the sole remaining work in existence of an early Italian artist. The colour is worthy of Titian.

"Well, this rather curious collection that Macnaught was making was already well known, when he heard, for the first time, the full history of this picture that now adorns his wall. Immediately, the desire to own it took full possession of him. He actually made a space for it on the wall, and thought of nothing else through the day, and dreamt of it through the night. If everything else failed I fully believe that he would have murdered the owner and carried it away by force.

"The picture had remained in the family of the old general who had taken it after it had been unearthed from the ruined city. As a sacred relic it had been handed down from father to son until the fifth generation, when it was owned by its lawful mistress, the Countess of Charlton.

"At this time, when the fever was strongly on him, business made it impossible for Macnaught to journey down from this place of his in Scotland to London, to personally inspect the picture. So well, however, had its charms been described to him, my humble voice being among those that urged him to procure it at any cost, that Macnaught determined to boldly write to the Countess of Charlton, and make her a direct offer for the picture. This he accordingly did, and for six days afterwards his soul was in torment.

"On the seventh day a letter was handed to him, heavily crested, and bearing the London post-mark. It was short, and very much to the point. The Countess of Charlton, it ran, while thanking Mr. Macnaught for his offer of her picture, regretted that she was unable to accept it.

"Macnaught was furious. He raved up and down his studio, tore his hair, threatened the life of the Countess, and swore unceasingly great Scotch oaths in the broadest dialect for the remainder of the day.

"When he grew a little calmer, he sat down, and dashed off another letter to the Countess, explaining his reasons, and offering her a prodigious sum for the picture.

"The letter that came by return made him all the more determined to have his way. It was something like this:

"Dear Mr. Macnaught,—I must again thank you for your kind offer for my picture, which, I may say in confidence, I should be only too pleased to accept, were it not for the fact that it is absolutely out of my power to do so. It is, as you say, a unique work of art, and would no doubt be a grace to your collection. It has been in our family for hundreds of years as a sacred relic When it is passed on from one generation to another a clause is invariably inserted in the will to the effect that it must, on no account, go out of the family. If this is done, the whole of the property and wealth that goes with the picture is to be forfeited. You see, therefore, that much as I would personally like to accept the money which your liberality offers, it is quite impossible for me to think of doing so.

"Yours very sincerely,

"Cecilian Charlton.

"'Cecilian Charlton be hanged,' roared Macnaught when he read this letter, 'will or no will, I ken verra weel I'll have that picture.'

"So he took a pound of tobacco, and shut himself up in his room and sat thinking of ways and means for the remainder of the day.

"Now Macnaught was a canny Scotsman, and the more he considered the letter, the more one or two points impressed themselves on his mind. In the first place, from a financial point of view, it was evident the Countess of Charlton might be termed very hard up; in the second place, she did not care a jot whether she had the picture that hung in her drawing-room, or whether any one else had it; and in the third place she was not an exceptionally scrupulous woman. And as Macnaught thought of these things several ideas occurred to him.

"It seemed to him that if, on some pretence or other, he made a copy of this picture, it would not be a very hard matter to transpose the two, and put his copy in place of the original. Then all that he had to do was to run off with his precious burden, and he would find himself in possession of one of the priceless treasures of the world, and no one would be the wiser.

"Now Macnaught was a Scotsman, and a religious man to boot, although the passion of his art caused him perhaps to do some things that he had better left undone. So when this thought of stealing the picture came to him, he sprang to his feet, and shouted:

"'Na, na, I will not sell my soul for a woman; but I will have her picture whether she cares or not.'

"So he sat down again, and thought it all over once more, and the idea of transposing the pictures stayed in his mind. And before he was half through the tobacco he had found the way."

Here Hawtree came to a pause, for he had been talking for a long while and feared that we might be dozing. So he sat up in his chair, and mixed himself a long drink, which he drank off at a gulp, so as to save future interruptions. While he was doing this I looked through my notes to see whether the story was promising. How was Macnaught to gain the picture that he coveted? He

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could make a copy, and transpose the two, and steal the genuine picture, but this he would not do. And the Countess of Charlton was not to be bribed, although she was not a scrupulous woman. I could see no way, so I implored Hawtree to continue.

"That afternoon Macnaught rode over to the town, and, going to the hotel, took an official piece of note-paper, and wrote his third letter to the Countess. In this he posed, I am ashamed to say, as an American millionaire, incidentally mentioning that he had made his money out of buttons. He had recently bought a mansion in New York, he said, and was anxious to obtain a few startling English pictures wherewith to ornament his walls. He had heard that the Countess of Charlton possessed a picture, the like of which there was none in existence. That was the very thing he wanted and he guessed that it would "knock" his friends. He would be pleased to pay, therefore, any price that the Countess would ask for it, and he added that she need not be careful as to a thousand or two. He then went on to say that if the Countess would sell the picture, he would send a good artist down to make a copy for her to keep in remembrance.

"'Personally,' said he, 'I should not know the copy from the original, and as I am shortly to return to America, no doubt you will kindly see that it is well packed. I very much regret that I am not able to come from Scotland to see you personally about the matter.'

"This extraordinary letter took Macnaught a long while to compose, and when it was finished he took it out to post it with his own hands, and then returned to the hotel to wait for the reply.

"When it came, people thought that the worthy artist had taken leave of his senses, for he did nothing but pat his chest, and chuckle mightily to himself.

"For the third letter of the Countess of Charlton said that she would be pleased to accept the American's offer, although the figure that she mentioned would have caused a start even to a millionaire. And would he please send an artist to make a copy as soon as possible?"

Here Hawtree paused to say that if we were getting tired of his story he would finish it to-morrow. But the artist remarked that he might as well finish it off now he had begun it, and since I was interested to see how Macnaught gained his picture in the end, I told him to go on.

"Macnaught," went on Hawtree, as fresh as though he had but begun to tell his story, "returned to his house, said good-bye to his friends, and taking a train to London, went to a barber's shop and had himself shaved, in case the Countess might by any chance recognise his face, and then presented himself at her door, saying that he had come from the American millionaire to paint her picture."

"Then, Macnaught," said the artist, "and the American millionaire, and the man who went to paint the picture, were all one and the same man?"

"Precisely," said Hawtree, "they were all characters in the plot that he had devised. Well, the Countess received Macnaught very graciously, and herself helped him take the picture from the wall, and place it where he might have the best light. Then he set to work, and, acting on a whim of the Countess, he made the very best of the canvasses the same, so that as the picture grew he had difficulty in telling the one from the other.

"Every morning the Countess came in and admired his work, and she seemed especially pleased when she saw how alike the two pictures were. At the end of a month Macnaught had finished his painting, and when he had allowed his picture to dry, he examined it closely, and thought that an ignorant person might very well think that the one was as good as the other.

"Then he sat down, and mopped his brow, and thought very hard of many things, for now the time for action had come. Then he sprang up hastily, lest his courage should forsake him. He took up the original painting that had been found in the ruins of the ancient city, and tore it away from its frame, and put his own painting in place of it. But he did not steal it, but merely placed it on his easel.

"'For,' said he, 'why should I sell my soul to this woman?'

"Then he sought out the Countess, and made his adieux to her, remarking that he had had a letter from his American patron asking him to request that the painting should be sent off immediately he had finished the copy.

"Then he left the house, and returned hastily to Scotland. Soon after he had arrived, the painting came to the hotel. With trembling fingers he unwrapped the parcel, and then he gave a great shout of joy. For there before him, lying snugly in its case, was the genuine picture that had belonged to the Countess of Charlton, the priceless gem of art, the thing that he coveted more than all the world.

"For the Countess, you understand, had fallen into the trap that he had laid for her, and thinking, no doubt, that to the millionaire button-maker one picture was as good as another, she had deliberately sent him, what, in her own mind, she thought to be a copy of the original picture.

"And this is the history of the painting that you see before you. Macnaught, however, did not send the Countess the large cheque that he had promised. He wrote her a letter in which he said he feared that she had very much misunderstood his former letters, for it was the original picture that he wanted, and not the copy that she had sent. He therefore was not prepared to pay her the large sum she had asked, but forwarded her the same amount that he had paid the artist, and trusted that she would find this satisfactory.

"He slipped in a cheque for five hundred pounds, and that is all that he has ever paid for one of the priceless treasures of the world. It is said that the unscrupulous Countess of Charlton fell into a fit, through chagrin and disappointment, when she read this letter. Yet she could do nothing."

"But how was it," asked the artist, "that the Countess did not bluff the matter out, and say that she had sent the wrong picture by mistake, and wished to sell him the genuine one?"

"You forget," replied Hawtree, "that it was completely out of her power to sell the picture at all. Is there anything else you can't understand?"

I looked through my notes to see if everything was quite clear. Macnaught, I gathered, had posed as an ignorant American, had gone himself to paint a copy of the picture, had transposed the two, trusting that the Countess would send away what she considered to be the copy. And in this he was not disappointed, for the Countess had fallen into his trap. So he had gained the picture, without stealing, or without hurting his Scotch conscience.

"Would you like me to go over the story again?" said Hawtree, "it is a little complicated."

"Don't trouble," replied the artist, "for now that you *have* finished I think I'll be going to bed."

Marcus Tintal.

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On the night of February 13th, 1797, an English fleet of fifteen ships of the line in close order, and in readiness for instant battle, was under easy sail off Cape St. Vincent. It was a moonless night, black with haze, and the great ships moved in silence like gigantic spectres over the sea.

Every now and again there came floating from the south-east the dull sound of a far-off gun. It was the grand fleet of Spain, consisting of twenty-seven ships of line, under Admiral Don Josef de Cordova; one great ship calling to another through the night, little dreaming that the sound of their guns was so keenly noted by the eager but silent fleet of their enemies to leeward.

The morning of the 14th—a day famous in the naval history of the Empire—broke dim and hazy, grey sea, grey fog, grey dawn, making all things strangely obscure. At half-past six, however, the keen-sighted British outlooks caught a glimpse of the huge, straggling line of Spaniards, stretching apparently through miles of sea haze.

"They are thumpers!" as the signal lieutenant of the *Barfleur* reported with emphasis to his captain; "they loom like Beachy Head in a fog."

The Spanish fleet was, indeed, the mightiest ever sent from Spanish ports since "that great fleet invincible" of 1588 carried into the English waters—but not out of them——

The richest spoils of Mexico, the stoutest hearts of Spain.

The Admiral's flag was borne by the *Santissima Trinidad*, a floating mountain, the largest ship at that time on the sea, and carrying on her four decks 130 guns. Next came six three-deckers, carrying 112 guns each; two ships of the line of eighty guns each, and seventeen carrying seventy-four guns, with no fewer than twelve thirty-four-gun frigates, to act as flying cordon of skirmishers.

Spain had joined France against Britain on September 12th, 1796, and Don Cordova, at the head of this immense fleet, had sailed from Cadiz to execute a daring and splendid strategy. He was to pick up the Toulon fleet, brush away the English squadron blockading Brest, add the great French fleet, lying imprisoned there, to his forces, and enter the British Channel with over a hundred sail of the line under his flag, and sweep in triumph to the mouth of the Thames.

If the plan succeeded, Portugal would fall, a descent was to be made on Ireland, and the British flag, it was reckoned, would be swept from the seas.

Sir John Jervis was lying in the track of the Spaniards to defeat this ingenious plan. Five ships of the line had been withdrawn from the squadron blockading Brest to strengthen him; still he had only fifteen ships against the twenty-seven huge Spaniards in front of him; whilst, if the French Toulon Fleet behind him broke out, he ran the risk of being crushed, so to speak, betwixt the upper and the nether millstone.

Never, perhaps, was the naval supremacy of England challenged so boldly, and with such a prospect of success, as at this moment.

The Northern powers had coalesced under Russia, and only a few weeks later the British guns were thundering over the roofs of Copenhagen, while the united flags of France and Spain were preparing to sweep through the narrow seas.

The "splendid isolation" of to-day is no novelty. In 1796, as it threatened to be in 1896, Great Britain stood singly against a world in arms, and it is scarcely too much to say that her fate hung on the fortunes of the fleet that, in the grey dawn of St. Valentine's Day a hundred years ago, was searching the skyline for the topmasts of Don Cordova's huge three-deckers.

Fifteen to twenty-seven is enormous odds, but, on the testimony of Nelson himself, a better fleet never carried the fortunes of a great country than that under Sir John Jervis. The mere names of the ships, or of their commanders, awaken more sonorous echoes than the famous catalogue of the ships in the "Iliad." Among them Trowbridge, in the *Culloden*, led the van; the line was formed of such ships as the *Victory*, the flag-ship, the *Barfleur*, the *Blenheim*, the *Captain*, with Nelson as Commodore, the *Excellent*, under Collingwood, the *Colossus*, under Murray, and the *Orion*, under Sir James Saumarez.

Finer sailors and more daring leaders never bore down upon an enemy's fleet. The picture offered by the two fleets in the cold haze of that fateful morning, as a matter of fact, reflected the difference in their fighting and sea-going qualities.

The Spanish fleet, a line of monsters, straggled formless and shapeless over miles of sea space, distracted with signals, fluttering with many coloured flags. The British fleet, grim and silent, bore down upon the enemy in two compact and firm drawn columns, ship following ship so closely and so exactly that bowsprit and stern almost touched, while an air-line drawn from the foremast of the leading ship to the mizen-mast of the last ship in each column would have touched almost every mast betwixt. Stately, measured, threatening, in perfect fighting order, the compact line of the British bore down on the Spaniards.

Nothing is more striking in the Battle of St. Vincent

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than the swift and resolute fashion in which Sir John Jervis leapt, so to speak, at his enemy's throat, with the silent but deadly leap of a bull-dog. As the fog lifted about nine o'clock, with the suddenness and dramatic effect of the lifting of a curtain in a great theatre, it revealed to the British Admiral a great opportunity. The weather division of the Spanish fleet, twenty-one gigantic ships, resembled nothing so much as a confused and swaying forest of masts; the leeward division—six ships in a cluster, almost as confused—was parted by an interval of nearly three miles from the main body of the fleet; and into that fatal gap, as with the swift and deadly thrust of a rapier, Jervis drove his fleet in one unswerving line, the two columns melting into one, ship following hard on ship.

The Spaniards strove furiously to close their line, the twenty-one huge ships bearing down from the windward, the smaller squadron clawing desperately up from the leeward. But the British fleet—a long line of gliding pyramids of sails, leaning over to the pressure of the wind, with "the meteor flag" flying from the peak of each vessel, and the curving lines of guns awaiting grim and silent beneath—was too swift.

As it swept through the gap the Spanish vice-admiral, in the *Principe de Asturias*, a great three-decker of 112 guns, tried the daring feat of breaking through the British line to join the severed squadron. He struck the English fleet almost exactly at the flag-ship, the *Victory*. The *Victory* was thrown into stays to meet her, the Spaniard swung round in response, and, exactly as her quarter was exposed to the broadside of the *Victory*, the thunder of a tremendous broadside rolled from that ship.

The unfortunate Spaniard was smitten as with a tempest of iron, and the next moment, with sails torn, topmasts hanging to leeward, ropes hanging loose in every direction, and her decks splashed red with the blood of her slaughtered crew, she broke off to windward.

The iron line of the British was unpierceable!

The leading three-decker of the Spanish lee division in like manner bore up, as though to break through the British line to join her admiral; but the grim succession of three-deckers following swift on each other like the links of a moving iron chain was too disquieting a prospect to be faced. It was not in Spanish seamanship, or, for the matter of that, in Spanish flesh and blood, to beat up in the teeth of such threatening lines of iron lips.

The Spanish ships swung suddenly back to leeward, and the fleet of Don Cordova was cloven in twain, as though by the stroke of some gigantic sword blade.

As soon as Sir John Jervis saw the steady line of his fleet drawn fair across the gap in the Spanish line, he flung his leading ships up to windward on the mass of the Spanish fleet, by this time beating up to windward. The *Culloden* led, thrust itself betwixt the hindermost Spanish three-deckers, and broke into flame and thunder on either side.

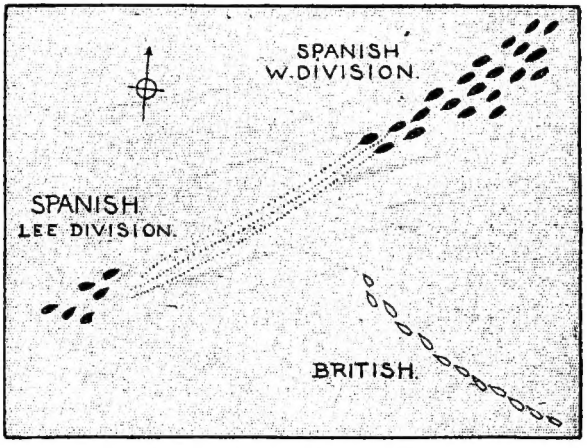
Six minutes after her came the *Blenheim*, then, in quick succession, the *Prince George*, the *Orion*, the *Colossus*. It was a crash of swaying masts and bellying sails, while below rose the shouting of the crews, and like the thrusts of fiery swords the flames shot out from the sides of the great three-deckers against each other, and over all rolled the thunder and the smoke of a Titanic sea-fight.

Nothing more murderous than close fighting betwixt the huge wooden ships of those days can well be imagined. The *Victory*, the largest British ship present in the action, was only 186ft. long and 52ft. broad; yet in that little area a thousand men fought, a hundred great guns thundered!

A Spanish ship like the *San Josef* was 194ft. in length and 54ft. in breadth; but in that area 112 guns were mounted, while the three decks were thronged with some 1,300 men. When floating batteries like these swept each other with the flame of swiftly repeated broadsides at a distance of a few score yards, the destruction may be better imagined than described.

The Spanish had an advantage in the number of guns and men, but the British established an instant mastery by their silent discipline, their perfect seamanship, and the speed with which their guns were worked. They fired at least three broadsides to every two the Spaniards discharged, and their fire had a deadly precision compared with which that of the Spaniards was mere distracted spluttering.

Meanwhile the dramatic crisis of the battle came swiftly on. The Spanish admiral was resolute to join the severed fragments of his fleet; the *Culloden*, the *Blenheim*, the *Prince George*, and the *Orion* were thundering amongst his rearmost ships, and as the British line swept up, each ship tacked as it crossed the



Position of British and Spanish fleets at 9 a.m. on February 14th, 1797.

gap in the Spanish line, bore up to windward, and added the thunder of its guns to the storm of battle raging amongst the hindmost Spaniards.

But, naturally, the section of the British line that had not yet passed the gap shortened with every minute, and the leading Spanish ships at last saw the sea to their leeward clear of the enemy, and the track open to their own lee squadron. Instantly they swung round to leeward, the great four-decker, the flag-ship, with a company of sister giants, the *San Josef* and the *Salvador del Mundo*, of 112 guns each, the *San Nicolas*, and three other great ships of 80 guns.

It was a bold and clever stroke. This great squadron, with the breeze behind it, had but to sweep past the rear of the British line, join the lee squadron, and bear up, and the Spanish fleet in one unbroken mass would confront the enemy.

The rear of the British line was held by Collingwood in the *Excellent*, next to him came the *Diadem*; the

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The party swept through on to the main deck.

third ship was the *Captain*, under Nelson. We may imagine how Nelson's solitary eye was fixed on the great Spanish three-deckers that formed the Spanish van as they suddenly swung round and came sweeping down to cross his stern. Not Napoleon himself had a vision more swift and keen for the changing physiognomy of a great battle than Nelson, and he met the Spanish admiral with a counter stroke as brilliant and daring as can be found in the whole history of naval warfare.

The British fleet saw the *Captain* suddenly swing out of line to leeward—in the direction from the Spanish line, that is—but with swift curve the *Captain* doubled back, shot between the two English ships that formed the rear of the line, and bore up straight in the path of the Spanish flag-ship, with its four decks, and the huge battleships on either side of it.

The *Captain*, it should be remembered, was the smallest seventy-four in the British fleet, and as the great Spanish ships closed round her and broke into flame, it seemed as if each one of them was big enough to hoist the *Captain* on board like a jolly boat.

Nelson's sudden movement was a breach of orders. It left a gap in the British line. To dash unsupported into the Spanish van seemed mere madness, and the spectacle, as the *Captain* opened fire on the huge *Santissima Trinidad*, was simply amazing. Nelson was in action at once with the flag-ship of 130 guns, two ships of 112 guns, one of 80 guns, and two of 74 guns.

To the spectators who watched the sight, the sides of the *Captain* seemed to throb with quick-following pulses of flame as its crew poured their shot into the huge hulks on every side of them. The Spaniards formed a mass so tangled that they could scarcely fire at the little *Captain* without injuring each other. Yet the little English ship seemed to shrivel beneath even the imperfect fire that did reach her.

Her foremast was shot away, her wheel-post shattered, her rigging torn, some of her guns dismantled, and the ship was practically incapable of further service either in the line or in chase. But Nelson had accomplished his purpose. He had stopped the rush of the Spanish van.

At this moment the *Excellent*, under Collingwood, swept into the storm of battle that raged round the *Captain*, and poured three tremendous broadsides into the Spanish three-decker, the *Salvador del Mundo*, that practically disabled her.

"We were not further from her," the domestic but hard-fighting Collingwood wrote to his wife, "than the length of our garden."

Then, with a fine feat of seamanship, the *Excellent* passed between the *Captain* and the *San Nicolas*, scourging that unfortunate ship with flame at a distance of ten yards, and then passed on to bestow its favours on the *Santissima Trinidad*. "Such a ship," Collingwood afterwards confided to his wife, "as I never saw before!"

Collingwood tormented that monster with his fire so vehemently that she actually struck, though possession of her was not taken before the other Spanish ships, coming up, rescued her, and she survived to carry the Spanish flag in the great fight of Trafalgar.

Meanwhile the crippled *Captain*, though actually disabled, had performed one of the most dramatic and brilliant feats in the history of naval warfare. Nelson

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put his helm to starboard, and ran, or rather drifted, on the quarter gallery of the *San Nicolas*, and at once boarded that leviathan.

Nelson himself crept through the quarter gallery window in the stern of the Spaniard, and found himself in the officers' cabin. The officers tried to show fight, but there was no denying the boarders who followed Nelson, and with shout and oath, with flash of pistol and ring of steel, the party swept through on to the main deck. But the *San Nicolas* had been boarded also at other points.

"The first man who jumped into the enemy's mizzen-chains," says Nelson, "was the first lieutenant of the ship, afterwards Captain Berry."

The English sailors dropped from their spritsail yard on to the Spaniard's deck, and by the time Nelson reached the poop of the *San Nicolas*, he found his lieutenant in the act of hauling down the Spanish flag. Nelson proceeded to collect the swords of the Spanish officers when a fire was opened upon them from the stern gallery of the admiral's ship, the *San Josef*, of 112 guns, whose sides were grinding against those of the *San Nicolas*. What could Nelson do? To keep his prize he must assault a still bigger ship. Of course he never hesitated! He flung his boarders up the side of the huge *San Josef*, but he himself, who was by no means robust, had to be assisted to climb the main chains of that vessel, his lieutenant this time dutifully assisting his commodore up instead of indecorously going ahead of him.

"At this moment," as Nelson records the incident, "a Spanish officer looked over the quarter-deck rail and said they surrendered. It was not long before I was on the quarter-deck, where the Spanish captain, with a bow, presented me his sword, and said the admiral was dying of his wounds. I asked him, on his honour, if the ship was surrendered. He declared she was, on which I gave him my hand, and desired him to call on his officers and ship's company and tell them of it, which he did, and on the quarter-deck of a Spanish first-rate—extravagant as the story may seem—did I take the swords of vanquished Spaniards, which, as I received, I gave to William Fearney, one of my bargemen, who put them, with the greatest *sang-froid*, under his arm, a circle of 'old Agamemnons,' with smoke-blackened faces, looking on in grim approval."

This is the story of how a British fleet of fifteen vessels defeated a Spanish fleet of twenty-seven, and captured four of their finest ships. It is the story, too, of how a single English ship, the smallest 74 in the fleet—but made unconquerable by the presence of Nelson—stayed the advance of a whole squadron of Spanish three-deckers, and took two ships, each bigger than itself, by boarding.

Nelson disobeyed orders by leaving the English line and flinging himself on the van of the Spaniards, but he saved the battle.

Calder, Jervis's captain, complained to the admiral that Nelson had "disobeyed orders."

"He certainly did," answered Jervis; "and if ever you commit such a breach of orders I will forgive you also."

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KNOLLYS' STORY.

Those who know my friend Knollys only casually are apt to set him down as a cynic, because, at times, his speech is slightly mordant and he is given to ridiculing bravery and charity as madness; but I know danger holds no dread for him, and have accidently happened on some of his many good deeds. To me he has always seemed a man of unusally lenient judgment, putting the best construction possible on the evil actions of his fellows; though his own life is beautifully clean, he takes people as he finds them, not feeling called upon to attempt to revolutionise the world.

If I am unreasonably proud of my friendship with Knollys, it is pardonable, for he is an experienced man of the world, who must be nearing fifty, whereas I am not yet thirty. Ever since he saved my life in India, at the imminent risk of his own, he holds, he feels, a certain amount of responsibility on my account, and I am only too willing to view the world under his tutelage.

But I am glad that my mother did not hear him relate the story that spoiled my dinner, which was assuredly a good one, since he ordered it. She maintains that Knollys is extremely unsympathetic; and, prejudiced as she is, she would not have observed that, under his cold exterior, there lurked a warm pity for his friend.

It had been arranged, during his short stay with us, that in two months I should join him in London; and the prospect of another delightful run across the Continent with him made me somewhat forgetful of the fact that it was his last night in this city.

He had rashly promised my cousin to visit his rose-gardens, and on that afternoon redeemed his word. When we met at the club I noticed that Knollys appeared tired. He stood at the window, apart from the other men, looking across at the plaza, and did not at first notice me.

"I suppose it was irksome," I began, "for Tom can talk of nothing but his wife and his roses. You see they are renewing their honeymoon. Their affairs looked very black for a time, but suddenly righted themselves, and their friends are suffering the consequences."

Knollys ceased to watch the wavering shadows of the trees, and turned inquiringly.

"It was a misunderstanding," I continued, as we walked out to dinner; "Tom forgot that appearances are often misleading, and she was unable to furnish a satisfactory explanation of her conduct."

"I conjectured something of the kind from what he told me coming back to the city, and it reminded me strongly of a little episode in the life of a friend of mine. And she, too, in some indefinable way—some turn of the head or the trick of the voice—recalled my friend's wife. The story might interest you."

"I am sure it would," I returned eagerly, for Knollys is always well worth hearing.

"It happened some years ago, but I think I remember the points quite well," he commenced, smiling faintly; "I am not so certain, however, that I shall be able to do the story justice, for I am not a clever *raconteur*, and you will probably surmise the end long ere I have reached it. My friend—we might call him Smith—my friend Smith was able to be of some service to a man whom he met in a foreign land. The man met with a fatal accident, a few days later, and, together with the valet, Smith volunteered to nurse him. The stranger, feeling he had a claim on Smith because of the first favour, burdened him with the pleasant task of bearing the news of his death to his wife.

"Upon Smith's return to England, he carried out his mission, and having gone once, went again. She was a very young woman, and very beautiful, and Smith was irresistibly attracted. Her husband had been a scoundrel, and, after a decent lapse of time, she married Smith. For the first four years of their marriage they were so intensely happy that it is possible they proved rather tiresome to their friends. About that time Smith began to miss money and other articles of value, and was finally able to trace the thefts to the butler. The man vainly denied the charge, and, although none of the missing valuables were found in his possession, he was discharged without a character. This mild measure was adopted because of the intercessions of my friend's wife.

"For some weeks Smith entertained no doubt that he had fastened the burglaries on the proper party, but on returning home one evening he found his wife in the library. She had opened his desk by means of a false key, and in her hands held a roll of notes. Guilt was depicted in every feature: she cowered before him—she was abject in her cowardice."

"She needed the money to save a brother," I broke in authoritatively.

"No; she had no brother nor any near relative who might need help," Knollys said, as he set down his glass. "The man, anxious to find some excuse for her, suggested this; but it was no relative. It was for herself; yet she had wanted for nothing that money could buy or love devise. He might not have conceived her sin to be so flagrant had she not permitted the servant to suffer in her stead. So far as it was possible, Smith made restitution to the man; but by her silence she had convicted herself of the most heinous of all transgressions in her husband's eyes. There was one way only in which he could explain the matter to himself. He had never believed in kleptomania until then, but it was the one thing upon which his mind centred. And she confessed she had often felt impelled to take valuables for which she could have no possible need.

"He was a proud man, and he was tortured by his discovery. He had regarded his wife, his child, and himself as being made of finer clay than the rest of mankind. His disillusion was complete. The day after she was unmasked she came into a splendid inheritance, but Smith rigorously refused to permit the expenditure of any of it in the household.

He dared not leave her for an instant, thinking the desire might come back to her. He sacrificed his pride by telling the true state of affairs to her maid, a trusted servant, and together they kept vigilant guard over her. It was the most insidious cruelty he could contrive—one that must have wounded her sorely. She was never

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permitted to lose sight of her sins. He was inflexible in his course, keeping her always under his relentless eyes. My friend Smith thought himself, in those days, quite capable of accusing and judging his prisoner, and seeing that the sentence was properly carried out. When she seemed to forget for an instant her past error, Smith ever so gently turned the thumb-screws. Ah, he really devised modes of exquisite torture that she should properly expiate her crime!

"No, she did not rebel; she drearily accepted the penalty of her guilt. At first she lived in deadly fear lest he should send her away from him; but when she found it was part of his plan to be with her constantly, she seemed content. She could not, rather would not, grow accustomed to the thought that she had forfeited Smith's love. During the first few days she hovered round him, hoping to lure some expression of pardon from him, some word of love. Never forgetting that she bore his name, he treated her with a cold civility that was more frightful to her than would have been an exhibition of brute force. He was disciplining himself all the while in repressing his feelings, for, as you have perhaps suspected, he loved her as passionately as ever.

"She devoted herself to the child, who had become a source of constant agony to Smith. If he took a fruit or sweetmeat that had been forbidden him, it became to Smith's fevered imagination evidence that he had inherited his mother's weakness; in other days it would have seemed the child's lovable fault or play.

"The child slept in his mother's apartments, and Smith was about to retire one night when his wife came in hurriedly, bidding him send immediately for their physician, for the little one was choking. Smith went back with her, and, after seeing the child, left the room—she thought to send for the family physician. She used the simple remedies that had formerly proved effectual, but without avail. She looked at Smith when he came back, but he did not speak.

"At length he told her that he had not summoned a physician, believing it better that the child should die."

"What?" I cried, aghast, my loud tone in marked contrast to his low, unhurried words.

"You are not eating," remarked Knollys, as he reflectively regarded the bead that had formed round the edge of his glass. "You are astonished at my friend's action, but he himself did not question the wisdom of its course; perhaps it did not occur to him that he could err. Better, he thought, to cause himself one sharp pang than untold misery to the bitter end. In fact, he believed he was doing a very good deed—to consign your child to death is not such a simple matter as it might appear. When the mother learnt what he had done, she was wildly indignant for an instant, then quietly placed the child in his crib and stoically watched his sufferings. And what had seemed quite right and courageous in himself struck Smith as monstrous in the mother. You are neglecting your fillet. You will find it——"

"But the mother?" I reminded.

"The mother?" echoed Knollys wearily. "You progress too rapidly. Smith was able to dismiss from his mind the idea that he had been instrumental in bringing about the little fellow's death, for it would have been impossible for the physician to reach the house before the child expired. The mother, however, did not reason with so much *finesse*, and, after the death of her child, faded visibly. In this instance, physicians were called in, but what they might have been able to do for the child they could not do for the mother. It is true she could not have found life very joyous, but her doctors agreed they had never seen anyone so determined to escape from the world. There was no illness—only a growing languidness, a gradual putting by of the smallest tasks, and a want of will to recover. If ever a woman died of a broken heart, it was my friend's wife."

"Did she give no explanation of her conduct?" I demanded, leaning on the table heavily.

Knollys was looking at something beyond me, and did not hear me until I had reiterated my question.

"So you do not believe she was a kleptomaniac? The explanation did not come from her, but from another quarter," he finally proceeded. "She was delirious for nearly a week before her death. In her lucid moments, she would ask the date, then strive to recollect something that elusively evaded her. She was continually murmuring about some money that was to be sent to someone—whom, they could not determine. Smith had been with her all day, and, towards evening, feeling he must be alone for a while to give vent to his misery, went to the library. The morning's post was awaiting him. The topmost letter was addressed to her in a man's unfamiliar hand. He tore it open, filled with an insane jealousy.

"Ah, of course, you perceive from whom it was. You are in the same position as the novel reader, who, knowing both sides of the story, is aware of the end long before the hero and heroine have lived it out. Unfortunately, Smith knew only his portion of the tale. The missive purported to come from her first husband, whom Smith had helped to bury, but whom she believed to be still alive, and cautioned her to forward his monthly allowance at once, or he would be under the painful necessity of declaring himself to Smith without delay. It was a pity he had not done so long before, as Smith would have recognised the valet. Does it not seem altogether impossible that she should have been so credulous?

"So, you see, the mystery, which Smith had believed to be no mystery, was cleared without her speaking, but a little too late, for, while Smith was reading the letter, she passed away, leaving him in a maze of maddening reflections. He has had a long while to appreciate the bitter pathos of the incident, and sometimes ponders on the problem of whether she would have confessed had he not suggested to her the excuse of kleptomania. Knowing the simplicity of her morals, he comprehends the struggle there must have been while the butler was suffering for her. I think Smith would have pardoned her for taking the money to buy the man, so that he should not make himself known; even her own silence, had he been conscious it was done that she might not be separated from him. Her love for Smith was the one passion of her life, and she paid for it dearly."

"Poor woman," I murmured tritely.

Knollys raised his head, his lips parted in a shadowy smile. "Note how we differ. I should say, 'Poor man.' She is in a place of peace."

"I am glad I am not acquainted with your friend Smith," I observed, trying to shake off the gloom of Knollys' story. "He must be a very sombre companion. Do you see much of him?"

"The world knows nothing of his story; he does not wear his heart on his sleeve. It is only to me that he confesses how dull he finds life. Yes, I see a great deal of my friend Smith—a great deal too much. Let us drink to his early demise. Believe me, it is what would please him best."

ALICE S. WOLF.

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SUMMARY.

Prologue.—The Hon. Ernest Wentworth lies dying at his estate, Chisholme Park. His wife, a light, pleasure-loving creature, falls under the mesmeric influence of Armand Lemaitre, who, by force of will power, compels her to rob her husband. While in the act of extracting a bundle of notes from a bureau she is interrupted by the appearance of her husband, who enters the room in his bed-clothes, silently points at her with his fore-finger, and then falls down dead. She shortly after leaves for Paris to join Lemaitre.

Nineteen years elapse. Edith Wentworth, who was adopted when a baby by Lady Hilton, is living at Hillcrest Lodge. Among the guests for Christmas are Cécile Delisle, a school-friend of Edith's, Professor Queech, Jack Heathcote, and Captain Arthur Musgrave. At York, on the journey down from King's Cross, Cécile observes that the carriage next to theirs contains a man and a woman. At their destination, a few miles further on, she notices a strange man there alone.

Lemaitre, alias Dr. Danton, arrives at the house as a guest, and exercises an influence over Edith that arouses the jealousy of Arthur, who strikes Danton, and agrees to fight a duel.

A murder is committed at Thorgill Beck. The body of a woman is discovered by one of Farmer Wilson's sons. Cécile deduces from the description of the body that it has been robbed. She visits the spot, and obtains the jewellery from the boy who first discovered the body.

In the duel between Danton and Musgrave only one of the pistols is loaded. Danton is lucky enough to draw the loaded one, but gives Musgrave an opportunity of leaving Hillcrest Lodge, never to return or to speak to Edith. This proposal is refused, with scorn. As the Doctor is about to fire, Cécile comes between the principals. In order to obviate further trouble Arthur agrees to Danton's conditions.

CHAPTER V.

The Face in the Locket.

Arthur sauntered away from the duelling-ground, his hands in his pockets, with a smile of scorn, but a heart that was nigh to breaking. The pledge of honour which he had just given had turned the fair aspect of the world into blackness for him.

Danton and the Professor wandered away by another path. Cécile, very pale and silent, walked towards the Lodge on the arm of Pendragon.

She had not seen Edith since her return from Thorgill Beck. She entered the Lodge, shivering, and hungry, and tired. She went hunting for Edith, and found her upstairs in her room getting dressed for dinner. Cécile lifted her arms to Edith's neck and held up her white face to be kissed.

"But, Cécile, dearest, where have you been? and how pale you look, dear!"

Cécile was dragging her down, kissing her passionately, but did not speak.

"You must not take those lonely rides by yourself," said Edith, pressing Cécile's cheeks tight between her hands, "and look! I am going to wear this sky blue at dinner. He said, you know, that he likes bright hues—oh, don't look so gloomy, my own darlingest love!"

A pang was at Cécile's heart, a whole world of apprehension. Her eyes dropped before Edith's. What were those "conditions" she had heard Arthur accept from Dr. Danton? She could not guess, but she feared.

"I am going to dress," she said, "let me go. I am not feeling like one's own darling to-night."

She screwed herself from Edith's arms, and went away towards her own apartments. There was a maid waiting there for her.

"Do not worry to-night, Jane," she said crossly. "One may attire oneself sometimes, I think? Go away!"

She sat on a chair under the light, alone, gazing listlessly before her; frowning a little now and then. Presently she put her hand in her pocket, and drew out the jewellery

"Do not worry to-night, Jane."

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she had obtained from Tom Wilson that day. She had not examined the things before, for some other people had got into the compartment of the train with her.

One by one she took them out: the rings—a wedding ring, and one set with diamonds and amethysts; then the watch, all bent and broken, of gold; then the chain bracelet, with battered rings; each of them, one by one, she examined minutely, holding them near to her eyes.

She had left the locket to the last. It was of gold, and slightly battered. As soon as she had it in her hand she started.

"But——" she said, and stopped.

She looked closely at the outside.

"But—but this was worn *beneath* the dress!"

She had the habit of speaking aloud to herself, in a low, whimpering murmur, when she was searching and probing into any hidden thing.

"Beneath the dress. One sees that by the way the gold has worn smooth on this side. She wore it so for years; she did not wish the locket, then, to be seen? But why not? Ah, because it contains a likeness! And that likeness is not the likeness of her husband. She did not want the husband to see the locket, because she did not want him to see the likeness. The likeness is a likeness of an old love—of a former husband, perhaps. Yes—yes—that is how it is. We shall see. We are near to light—to light!"

But she would not open the locket. Somehow she was afraid. For five minutes she sat with it in her palm, eyeing the outside.

"But this is nonsense!" she said suddenly; and the next moment the locket was open in her hands, and she was pouring over a small oval daguerreotype set in one of the leaves.

She went utterly white.

"My God!"

Her head dropped in her hands on the table.

"Oh, my God!" burst in a groan from her dry lips.

The face which she had seen she knew. It was the face of a man. A face exactly similar hung among the family portraits of the Hiltons in the corridor without.

"She was Edith's mother!" sobbed Cécile—"this—this is the portrait of her father!"

Ten minutes passed, and her head rested still in her hands on the table. Then she rose, calm and pallid, her lips pressed together.

"Well, love," she said, "you shall be avenged! I will find the murderer of your mother!"

When she had dressed hurriedly, and gone down to dinner, the report had already spread that Captain Arthur Musgrave had departed from the Lodge.

He had left a note for Lady Hilton saying that a sudden duty called him away.

"These, then," said Cécile to herself, "were the 'conditions'!"

CHAPTER VI.

In the Conservatory.

The house-party at Hillcrest broke up soon after the middle of January. Nearly the last of the guests to leave was Dr. Danton. Cécile for a whole week had been waiting expectant.

"Why does the man not go?" she said.

She had an invitation to a country-house, near the garrison town of Ilminster, to stay with the St. John-Heygates, and was anxious to be gone. Ilminster was the town at which Arthur's cavalry regiment was now stationed. Cécile wished to be near him.

"You should go, you know," said Edith.

Cécile pouted.

"Do not worry," she said. "I will go when there is need. Now is no hurry."

"But what are you waiting for, darling? I shall want you in London with us soon, you know."

Among the rich foliage of the place they met.

Cécile kept her own counsel, and waited—waited for Danton to go.

Lady Hilton was shortly to leave for Cannes for a few weeks' stay, prior to the opening of the London season. Edith had consented to be parted from Cécile for a little, and was going to Seaton Abbey, the Duke of Grandford's seat. Seaton Abbey is in the same county as Giltwood Towers, the St. John-Heygates' place, and only twenty miles away; so that the two girls could meet as often as they desired.

Cécile waited for Dr. Danton to go.

Tom Wilson had not put in an appearance. Cécile did not forget him, and after waiting a week, wrote this short letter to Thorgill Beck:

"Tom, you've got to come — understand. — Cécile Delisle."

But Tom did not come.

As Cécile was waiting for Danton to go, so was he waiting for her to set out. She kept religiously close to Edith's side, day by day, from morning to night; and Danton was eating his heart out with anxiety to speak to Edith.

"That man believes to outwit me," said Cécile, "but he reckons wrong this time."

"How outwit you, dear?" asked Edith.

"You are not so blind! Here I wait. The Captain Arthur is a lucky man—he has one woman to love him, and another to serve his interests."

"Cécile! you do say things! And I am afraid the Captain is rather undeserving of all this feminine devotion, isn't he?"

"But you love him, Edith?—you love him?"

Edith squeezed her tight in her arms, fearful even to whisper her secret.

"And why undeserving, pray?" asked Cécile.

"The Captain has a most unloverlike lack of ceremony, dear. His departure was abrupt, to say the least of it."

"He had to go," said Cécile.

"Nonsense! why?"

"He had to go. One must trust one's own sweet love. Mind not *why*. I happen to know that he had to go. I do not choose—at present—to tell everything I know."

"You are too fond of mysteries, Cécile, darling. At least he might have said good-bye."

"I believe he could not. I believe there was a strong reason which prevented him. One must have faith in someone who loves one."

But that night, Cécile notwithstanding, Danton found

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his chance; only for a minute, as they moved from dinner. Lady Hilton had called back Cécile to mention something to her. And Danton, stooping low over Edith, said:

"Once more, before I go, I wish very much to speak with you alone."

His head was close to hers. His brows were frowning.

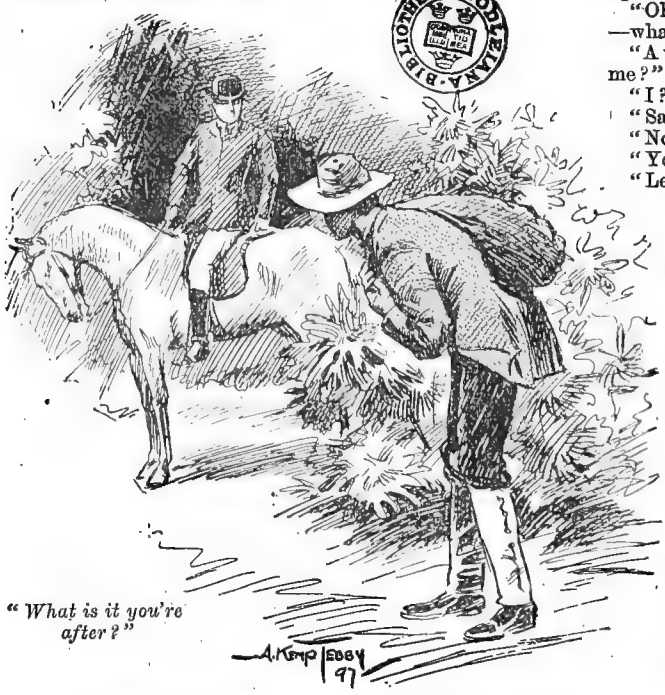
Edith half-glanced up at him.

"I shall be smoking in the conservatory at nine. Grant me this!"

"I—really——"

"Grant me this, Edith!"

The girl's will melted. Once again that dreamy yielding state, into which close proximity with Danton always brought her, overcame her.



"What is it you're after?"

She whispered the "yes" so low that he had to bend lower and ask:

"Did you say 'yes'?"

"Yes," she repeated.

Two minutes later she was wondering at herself for consenting.

But at nine, with absolute cunning, she ran from Cécile up the stairs and descended by another way to the conservatory. Among the rich foliage of the place they met.

Danton took her hand, and they sat within the very bower where Arthur's stinging chastisement had fallen upon the Frenchman's face.

"We have not long to speak," said Edith—"what is it——?"

"You must say something definite to me before I go," answered Danton. "I want to go to-morrow. It is dreadfully hard to tear myself from you. I cannot tell you all you are to me. You are my very soul's soul. Say something kind before I go."

"I have told you—I do not know what to say—I cannot coerce my heart——"

"You don't mean to say that you still cherish a secret fondness for that soldier boy?"

"I did not say that!" cried Edith with a touch of spirit. "You should not speak to me in that way. Even if it be so, do you suppose I am devoid of modesty?"

"Calm yourself: it is too cruel—it is too wildly absurd—for you to be angry with *me*. But the soldier boy you must forget. It is incredible that you should choose that drawling, brainless creature in preference to *me*, who am your soul, your life. And besides he is not worthy of you. He has given you up. He has told me so."

"Told *you* so?" Her widening eyes turned slowly round upon him.

"Yes. He has told me that he will never even speak to you again as long as he lives."

"He—said—that—to—*you?*"

"Yes. I give you my word. Do not think of him. He is a mere brainless coward."

Edith's heart was throbbing in her bosom with a thousand agonies of shame, rage, despair.

"Oh, let me go," she cried, "you shame—you torture me—what have you to say to me?"

"A word of comfort—one word—don't go—you will marry me?"

"I? You? No!"

"Say yes!"

"No!"

"You *shall* say yes!"

"Let me go—oh do!"

"Then say yes!"

"No—not to-night."

He was frowning, frowning into the back of her head, as he had frowned upon her mother's head.

"Yes—is it yes?"

"Not to-night—to-morrow—I feel stifling!"

"I am yours, you know, Edith! You are mine—my soul—my body—flesh and bone. Edith! say yes."

Her head fell slightly backward and sideward to his shoulder; up went her heaving breast, giving forth, with the sigh of one who dies, the long-drawn "yes."

For a moment she lost consciousness, but her eyelids which had drooped in hypnotic sleep, opened at the sound of the dearest voice in all the world.

Cécile stood at the entrance of the bower.

"You are here, then?" she said. "Come, come, darling! Lady Hilton wants you. You will have the goodness to excuse Miss Wentworth," she added, to Danton.

For half a minute the eyes of the girl and the man met in a long, searching gaze, in a long, deadly challenge.

CHAPTER VII.

The Bag of Apples.

Hillcrest Lodge was empty, and Jack Heathcote was at the very bottom of the well of despair. His bird had flown.

"What a fool I was to fancy she would ever care for me," he said to himself twenty times a day. "Why, the cleverest man going wouldn't be half good enough for her."

His white left eyebrow rose up, and the right sank down from a forehead wrinkled with despondent care. He walked about idle all the day, with his hands bulging out his trousers pockets.

"P'raps I ought to have spoken out more plain," he said, "but what's the good? A man can't go putting such questions to Queen Victoria. I suppose one of those don't-care soldier fellows will get her."

His place was not far from Hillcrest, and sometimes in the morning he rode over on a high-trotting bay to watch from the lawn the house in which Cécile had slept, and eaten, and talked. How good it was of her that day to take him to Seaborough! Fool he was! He ought to have spoken out then!

One morning he sat on his horse watching the front windows, when a tall boy with weary steps slouched near him. He had on a wide-brimmed felt hat, and carried a heavy bag of apples.

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As he came opposite to where Jack Heathcote sat on his horse, he stood and looked round toward the house for some minutes; then with a "Gosh, A doan't ca: e!" started again his weary walk away from the house.

Heathcote, noticing something odd and travel-worn in his appearance, called out:

"What is it you're after?"

"Cécile Delisle," said the boy.

"I'm after something very similar myself," said Jack to himself, "but it's no go." Then he added louder: "Come here. What's your name?"

The boy swung sullenly up to the horse.

"A'm Tom Wilson," he said.

"What's it you want?"

"A've brought Cécile Delisle a bag o' apples."

"It's no go, Tom," said Jack, "bird's flown."

"There doan't seem to be noaboddy aboot," said Tom.

"No—they're gone, all gone. But stop! aren't you the boy I heard her speak about? Didn't she write you a letter?"

"A'm the one."

"Then you're the luckiest dog in the world, that's all I can say. But why didn't you come before?"

"A was e'en thinking o'er it."

"Something like myself, boy. But it's all up: Miss Delisle's away enjoying herself with other people."

"Where aboots?"

"A place called Giltwood Towers, near Ilminster, in Shropshire."

"A'right! A'll foind her," said Tom.

"You! why, the young monkey——"

But Tom had already recommenced his dogged slow slouch, burdened with his bag of apples; and did not turn his head.

Three days later as Cécile was walking down an avenue of limes at Giltwood Towers, in the afternoon gloaming, she uttered a sudden cry of glee. Before her stood Tom Wilson with his bag of apples, with his hanging head, begrimed with mud and dust from top to toe.

"Tom! Tom! I knew you would come," cried Cécile.

Tom could not get a sound from his throat. Part of the way only he had travelled by railway; that day he had walked thirty miles.

He held out the bag.

Cécile peeped inside, and uttered another cry.

"Oh! Why, I *love* apples! And I shall eat *everyone* of these, and not even my dearest friend shall have *half* of one! I knew very well that you were good—but, oh, how tired you look, Tom! Come with me this moment!"

She took hold of the boy with one hand and of the apples with the other, and led the way to the back of the mansion toward the kitchen.

Here a table was soon spread, and Tom sat before cold meat and bread and beer.

"And you have come just at the right time, Tom," said Cécile, sitting near, "just when I have something for you to do."

Tom's eyes gleamed with pleasure.

"And you love me now, Tom?"

Tom smiled.

"And you would not stab me with a knife, I think?"

"Not Oi," said Tom from behind a full mouth.

"Then when you are done, come round to the front and ask for me. I am going away to write a letter which I wish you to deliver for me this night, see? You are tired, and shall have a horse. After an hour, come."

She got up, took Tom's shaggy head in her two hands, and dipped a kiss upon it; then ran away a little, and then back.

"But tell me, you wonderful boy, how did you find out where I was?"

"A saw a gentleman on a horse, i' t' early mornin' lookin' at t' house; *he* toald me."

"The house? What house?"

"T' house where thoo lived."

Cécile began to ripple with laughter.

"What sort of gentleman, then? A little man?"

"Aye."

"With white hair, Tom?"

"Aye."

Cécile's hands went clapping with gaiety; she left a long trail of laughter behind her as she ran away.

He passed up and down the ranks.

An hour later Tom mounted on an old grey cob of the house-stables, and set out for Ilminster, with a letter from Cécile to Captain Musgrave.

But half way on the road he found himself utterly lost, and had to travel a long distance before he was directed by a chance peasant to the right path again. When he reached the barracks it was long past midnight, and he was unable to gain admittance through the closed gates.

He and his horse slept at a small tavern in the town.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Broken Pledge.

The barracks lay at the western extremity of Ilminster. At the end of the main street of this well-to-do but rather sleepy town, you ascended a rising roadway for about a quarter of a mile, and then came upon a common, where stood the barracks.

The regimental orders for that morning ran: "The troop will parade at ten a.m. for dismounted sword exercise;" and at ten a.m. the parade-ground, or vast quadrangle inside the barrack-buildings, was bright with glinting spurs, and bosoms as red and round as robin-redbreast in his brightest liveries.

Captain Musgrave was acting adjutant, and at this early hour had to be out of bed to see that the drill-sergeant gave the recruits their necessary instruction in the art of bending the spinal column from convex to concave, until the nine months had elapsed which are deemed essential to the making of a warrior.

"Troop—attention!" went the spruce sergeant-major, as the captain came across the barrack-square, his figure clasped in the close-fitting, braided coat.

He passed up and down the ranks, giving an occasional hint to some raw novice, pointing at the lack of lustre in a pouch, or the imperfect whiteness of a belt.

He was about to visit another part of the grounds, when the sergeant-major said:

"There was a lad wanting to speak to you this morning, sir. I told him to wait yonder at the door of the orderly-room."

Arthur turned on his heels in that direction, and was presently envisaging Tom Wilson.

"Is it you who want to see Captain Musgrave?" he asked. "Give me the letter, if it is for him."

Tom examined him suspiciously, and then held out the letter.

It began:

To-morrow night I wish to see you particularly, and as you may want plenty of notice I send you the letter by messenger to-night, so that you may not fail.

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"Why did you fail to bring this last night?" asked Arthur.

"Missed my way," said Tom.

"You are a stranger here, I imagine?"

"Aye."

The letter proceeded:

First of all, I want to tell you that the bearer of this is a great friend of mine, a dear, rude, affectionate little savage, whom I want much to humanise. And I am going to ask you, as a great favour to me, if you will have him for your soldier-servant, and treat him very kindly for me. I have the fancy that he is a runaway from home for my sake, and naturally I wish him to be in the best hands. If you will do this, I promise you that he is very shrewd and strong-minded, and some day may show himself more than worthy of his meat. But you must lead and not drive him, otherwise you will find that you have got the wrong man this time.

"What frightful nonsense," sighed Arthur, "it happens, however, that I do want a servant. Here—would you care to be a soldier and my servant, you?"

"Not Oi," said Tom.

"You would not?"

"Not Oi."

"That settles it, then. But the lady here says that she wants you to be."

"Well, if *she* wants, I will."

"It is quite a question of the heart, I see. Will you do, then, everything that she wants?"

"Aye," said Tom.

"Very well. We shall see."

The letter continued:

You know, perhaps, the Dragon Inn? It is a little outside Ilminster at the east end. As I have to be in Ilminster during the afternoon, I will wait at the inn for you *at nine*. Pray do not fail, as the matter is very important. I have it on good authority that the wines and spirits there are excellent. *At nine*, then.

Arthur drank his glassful, and rose on unsteady legs.

"What the deuce do *I* care about the wines and spirits at the Dragon Inn?" muttered Arthur. "Little French girls that behave like mad women in a play should be abolished. Can the child be in love with me?"

That very morning, at Seaton Abbey, thirty miles away, Edith, too, was reading a letter from Cécile. It said:

One is *dying* for a sight of one's own sweet face, and hungering for one's own sweet lips. I will not wait. To-morrow I will be in Ilminster, and if you come then, I shall have you all, *all*, to myself. We will spend the night together at a dear little old-fashioned inn called the Dragon, a short way beyond Ilminster, on the east. Just outside the gates there is a very long lane, long and narrow, between hedges, where you will await me *at ten*, exactly, in the night. Do not enter the inn, but wait there for me, so that we enter together. Do just as one's own love tells to one, and one will not go far wrong. The wines and spirits at the inn are said to be excellent. *At ten*, then.

"Sweet, mysterious Cécile!" said Edith, rapturously kissing the letter. "The wines and spirits!—what *can* she mean?"

Cécile had engaged a parlour on the first floor of the Dragon, a rather lonely country inn in the middle of fields and woodland, very sombre-looking, and deserted at night.

In this room by ten minutes past nine she sat alone with Arthur Musgrave. There was a small square table in the centre, covered with brown oilcloth, some old carved oak chairs, some old tapestry hanging on the wainscotting.

"And do you like Tom?" asked Cécile, wriggling herself to a position of comfort in the armchair.

"Oh, I dare say he will learn to govern me without overmuch friction in time," drawled the Captain. "He is at present, as you say, rather a cannibal. But one must expect to be the prey of one's servants, I suppose."

He suppressed a yawn, languidly wondering why he found himself in this vile den.

A waiter entered with a tray bearing two bottles, a large bowl, glasses, and biscuits.

"You are permitted to smoke, Captain Arthur," said Cécile, "and I will myself, you see, take a cigarette. The spirits are for you, the wine for me."

"You are wonderfully good," said the Captain, adding to himself, "and an uncommonly fast little witch, too."

But he composed himself comfortably in his chair, and began smoking a cheroot, Indian fashion, with the large end in his mouth. Cécile, with half-closed eyes and thrown-back head, was puffing clouds of cigarette-smoke into the air. Then in a moment:

"Let me do the *devoirs*," she cried, jumping up. "Do you like much to drink?"

"I? Drink? No—I'm afraid I am rather exemplary in that way. I hardly ever 'take anything,' as we say—that is, when I can help it."

"So much the better," said Cécile to herself, "you will topple over sooner." Then she added aloud:

"You like the woman better than the wine, is it not?"

She was a little excited to-night, and whenever she was excited her English became very Frenchified in its turns of expression.

"Whatever will she say next?" wondered the Captain with languidly lifted eyebrows.

"But at least," said Cécile, "you like *the punch?* I have

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made, see, a bowl to be ready for you. I, myself, shall I confess——"

"Well?"

"I like the wine—yes!"

"Naughty," said the Captain.

"Oh no—not so naughty. One is not a nun. I do not say I like to be stupefied, but to be just nicely—what do you say?—'elevated.'"

"Quite so: I am in no danger of misunderstanding you at all."

"And, look here, shall we have—what you call it?—a game? For every glass of the wine I drink, you drink one of the punch? You are not a monk, I think?"

"Not at all a monk," said Arthur. "I entirely agree to anything you want me to do."

"Well, then——"

She poured out a glass of wine, and ladled out a spoonful of punch, which she handed to Arthur.

"It is to be hoped that you will not drink many glasses of wine," said Arthur, coughing after his drink, "this brew is dreadfully hot and strong!"

"Yes! I shall drink," she nodded laughing. "A soldier should not be beaten by a lady, is it not?"

Arthur hated to be called "a soldier."

"But now—I must talk to you more seriously," went on Cécile. "You know, perhaps, that Dr. Danton is engaged to my friend, Miss Wentworth?"

Arthur went white.

"Another glass," said Cécile replenishing his, and drinking more wine.

"No, I did not know," said Arthur. "I prefer—really—if you won't mind—not to speak on that subject."

"But, yes, I mind," answered Cécile. "I wish you to know. He gained his point by a misrepresentation, you see."

"What misrepresentation?"

"He said you had promised never to speak to Miss Wentworth again."

"The cur mentioned that?" cried Arthur, half springing from his chair.

"Yes. The subject is painful. I will drink again, if you do not mind."

For the third time she ladled punch into Arthur's glass. Each time as he drank he coughed. A distinct bright flush mounted to his forehead and cheek.

"If you please," he said, "I shall be glad if you will drop the subject. I do not care what Miss Wentworth chooses to think of me. As to what the man, Danton, said, it is true. I can never, as long as I live, hold any sort of communication with Miss Wentworth. It is *your* fault, too."

"*My* fault, is it?"

"You know. You came and interfered in our fight. I was so disgusted with the frightful scene, that I took the only chance to clear out of it."

"But if I had not come you would have been shot, most certain," said Cécile.

"Shot, yes; but that would have been the height of blessedness compared with the life I now live."

"You care so much for Edith, then?"

"Care for her?" he cried wildly, "why, I die for her—I perish for her. Oh, God!"

Then immediately, in the depths of his fuddled brain, he had the dim consciousness that he was showing emotion—before a lady—he who despised a man for showing emotion under any circumstances.

What was the matter with him? Was the punch drugged? It was, at all events, devilishly strong.

"I will drink again," said Cécile. "The subject is a painful one."

She ladled out some more punch, nearly a glassful, and Arther, hardly noticing the quantity, drank it—the whole of it.

"Still there is no need to despair," said Cécile, her own forehead flushed with the yeast of the wine. I can tell you for certain, that you do not love Edith more——"

"Arthur!" she murmured.

"Say it!" he cried, staring in tipsy hunger upon her face.

"More—more than she loves you."

"That *is* so, then?" he cried, "that *is* so, for very certain?"

"Yes it *is* so," said Cécile, glancing at the face of an old grandfather's clock in a corner.

"Then, by Heaven——"

"I cannot drink more wine," she said rising, "only one more glass"—she poured out wine and punch into the two glasses—"and then you must go. I have said what I wished to say."

It was three minutes to ten by the big clock in the corner.

Arthur drank his glassful, and rose on unsteady legs. His eyes were glary with intoxication; the room swam round him. A wild madness and exhilaration reeled in his brain.

"Good-bye! Go now!" said Cécile. "Down the stairs this way, then out by the garden gate, then straight on along the narrow lane—straight on, you know!"

She held a candle while he stumbled down the stairs, and heard him go out by the gravel-path, and heard the gate bang behind him. Then she threw herself on a couch, laughing gleefully and guiltily.

The lane was dark, and narrow, and lonely. A hundred yards from the inn stood a solitary dim lamp on its post.

Beneath this, as Arthur stumbled forward, with one arm going out waving in his joyous intoxication, he saw a figure stand. He had to pass close to her, and the lamplight shone on their two faces.

They stared at each other for half a minute.

The next moment he had her in his arms, his lips glued passionately to hers.

"Edith! Edith! You are mine!"

His cry rang through the quiet night.

"Arthur!" she murmured. "Darling! Arthur!"

(To be continued.)

Asterisk Letter Competition.

NO. 2.

On page 317 will be found a sentence in which the central letters of each word have been dropped, and asterisks substituted.

Two guineas will be given to the reader who sends in on the back of a post-card the paragraph which most closely resembles the original.

All attempts must reach this office by Monday, March 8th.

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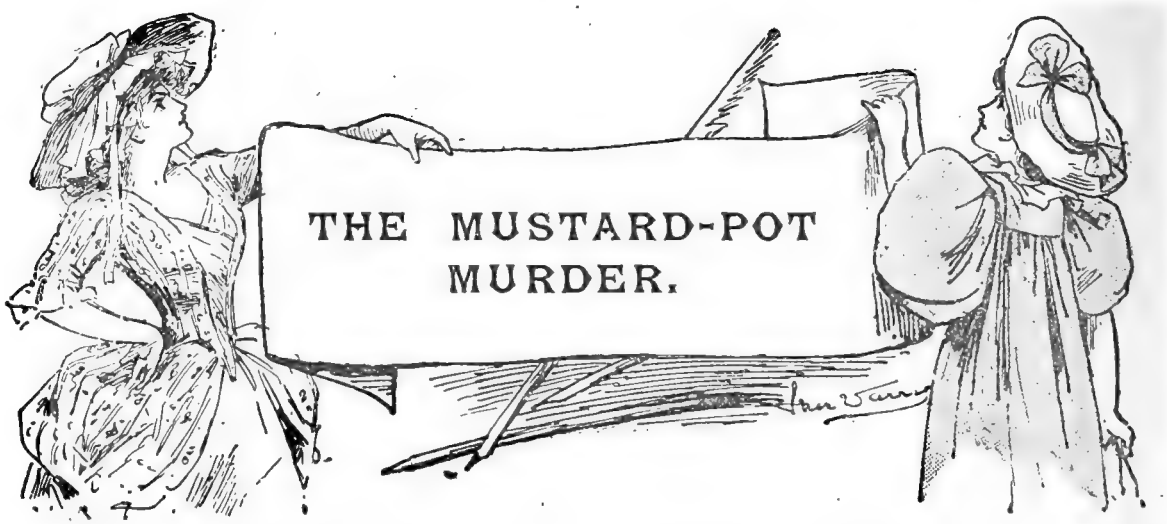

"It had to be," said the old man who lived next door. "It was Fate."

He waved his hand at the solid-faced prisoner an officer was leading down the street. They had just discovered the crime which a few weeks ago all Paris was talking about as "the murder of the Rue Saint-Maur."

The old man had been expecting it. He was an unpleasant old man, and had feared he would die before it happened. He was gratified, therefore, that he had not missed it.

Eight years ago Louis Désire Besnard and his wife came into the Rue Saint-Maur. They were bride and bridegroom. Then she was fifty-eight. He was forty-one. They rented a small shop at No. 49 and sold wine and groceries to the neighbourhood. Their affairs prospered. They had a sleeping apartment on the first floor upstairs.

About a year ago the woman, who up to that time had been an affectionate wife, began to show curiously violent temper towards her husband. She was sixty-four then and he was forty-seven. One evening cries of "Help! Murder!" and terrifying shrieks came from the Besnard apartment. The neighbours hurried in and found Madame Besnard beating her husband.

Each time she struck him she screamed for help. In a few days there were more cries from the Besnard *ménage*. It became a regular thing. At first the neighbours came. "Surely he must be murdering her," they said. Presently they learnt better and came no more.

When the shrieks startled passers-by the inhabitants of the street would say: "Madame Besnard is 'combing her beloved.'"

Madame Besnard had developed an insane jealousy. Each time a woman customer entered the shop there was a scene. She who had been a loving wife became a fury. What was at her hand in these moments of rage she hurled at him.

Besnard was powerful and in the prime of life. The neighbours wondered that he endured so much.

"How is it, Besnard?" said one.

"If I struck her," he answered, "I should kill her. My hand is too heavy."

When the old man, whom the street called "Papa" Collignon heard this he chuckled, for he knew what was passing in the shopkeeper's mind, and he thought that perhaps he would live long enough after all. But the winter had been a hard one on "Papa" Collignon; he was very feeble.

As spring came on, the screams from the Besnard *ménage* and the assaults of the wife came to be taken as a matter of course in the Rue Saint-Maur. On one of the first very hot days of early summer—it was a Tuesday—word was passed through the street that Madame Besnard was in an unusually bad temper even for her. All day she sought chances (and found them) to pick quarrels with customers and neighbours, and above all with Besnard.

In the morning she kicked him on the calf of his leg and cut it open so that he had to go to a chemist to get it plastered up, and a second time to have the wound re-dressed. But Madame Besnard was not satisfied.

"I shall kill him yet," she confided to a friend. "I only hurt him this morning. I have got to kill him."

At 6.30 o'clock that evening the *concierge*, M. Boirot, was in his room with his wife and child. His room was next the back shop where the Besnards dined at this hour. At 6.30 precisely, through the wall they heard the agonised woman's shrieks and the cries of "Save me! Murder!"

"Listen," said the *concierge*. "Madame Besnard is beating her husband again."

But the screams, though a commonplace occurrence, terrified the child and threw her into a fit of sobbing. Madame Boirot and her husband had to quiet her. It was half-an-hour before the little girl was still again.

Before long Boirot saw Besnard pass the *concierge's* window and go upstairs to bed.

"But madame?" said the *concierge's* wife, "where is the wife?"

"She must have gone up while we were tending the baby," said Boirot.

Early on Wednesday the wine-merchant opened his shop as on other days. But his wife was not there. By 10 o'clock the word had gone through the street that Madame Besnard was not at the shop.

When "Papa" Collignon heard it he tottered in and bought a whole litre of wine, and chatted with Besnard and hoped madame was not indisposed.

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The wine-merchant thanked him much. Madame was upstairs.

But the *concierge* told what he had heard at 6.30 o'clock on the evening before to several of the lodgers of the house, and they, too, went to Besnard.

"She had just gone for a walk," said he. "Not far, only in the neighbourhood. I expect her back any moment."

All day the dwellers in the house watched for the return of Madame Besnard, but she did not come. In the afternoon the *concierge* called to a policeman in plain clothes who was passing. He told him his suspicions.

The officer went down into the shop. "What has become of your wife?" he asked bluntly.

"She is upstairs," was the answer.

"I want to see her," said the officer, and he went out and up the stairs to the Besnard apartment. The *concierge* let him in. Madame Besnard was not there.

He went back to the shop.

"Ah, yes," said the wine-merchant, "she must have stepped out." He grew pale as he said this, as if he were going to faint.

Thursday morning Madame Besnard had not come back, but the shop was open as usual. The *concierge* decided to wait no longer. At eleven o'clock he went to the Police Commissariat of the precinct and told the magistrate his story. The magistrate, M. Bottelier-Lasquin, went with him to No. 49, Rue Saint-Maur.

Besnard was at his cash desk, getting change for a customer.

"Where is your wife?" the officer asked sharply.

"She is out walking," was the answer.

M. Bottelier-Lasquin looked the wine-merchant in the eyes. "Come," he said, "that will not do. Where is she?"

Besnard had been pale and confused before. Now he became very calm. He shrugged his shoulders. "Very well," he said, "she is in there." He pointed to the back shop.

In a corner the officer found Madame Besnard. The body was standing up, wedged against the wall by boxes and sacks. A plank and some old clothes hid it. The blood had run from a wound in the head, and covered the face. The skull was fractured.

The magistrate ordered the body to the Morgue and took Besnard to the station. It was then that "Papa" Collignon had waved his hand at him.

The murderer confessed freely.

At 6.30 o'clock on Tuesday evening they were finishing dinner in the back shop. There was a quarrel, and Madame Besnard, snatching a salad-bowl from the table, hurled it into his face. It stunned him for the moment. His anger flashed up. He was exasperated beyond endurance. He seized a heavy crockery mustard-pot and threw it with all his might. Her head took the blow. She dropped, moaned a few minutes, and died.

He left the body where it fell and went up the stairs to his room. At two o'clock in the morning he stole down again and dragged it into the corner, stood it up, and hid it behind the packing-case as the officer found it.

What was he going to do with it? He did not know. He hadn't thought about it much. "It was pleasant to have the shop quiet."

Was he sorry? He supposed so, but he did not know certainly.

"It was pleasant to be quiet." ARTHUR MOTT.

RESULT OF COMPETITIONS.

RESULT OF ASTERISK COMPETITION.

NO. I.

THE first reader to forward a correct solution in this competition was Mr. C. B. Collin, Booking Office, Manchester Exchange Station, L. and N.W.R.

Below is published the original sentence:

A deep silence ensued, and Retta, fancying she knew her charge fully, and believing what she said, quickly dismissed her indignation at the girl's wild words. In the interval Lalage grew restless, and a quick observer might have discerned an expression upon her lovely face, in fact, a something about her whole mien, inspiring a shudder of incalculable fear.

RESULT OF PICTURE COMPETITION.

NO. 2.

Below appear the names and addresses of the prize winners in this competition:

W. Hodgson, 2, Eton Street, Plumstead, £5.

The following receive £1 each:

T. Stanley, 30, Garturk Street, Govanhill, Glasgow.
J. D. Monsen, 56, Bryantwood Road, Highbury, N.
F. H. Burkett, 19, Glenthorn Road, Hammersmith.
W. Power, "Ellery," New Brighton, Cheshire.
R. H. Seater, 28, Woodside Road, Woodside, Surrey.

The winning attempt is here given.

1.
Picture rejected,
Artist dejected,
Thinking so sadly,
Of cheque he wants badly.

2.
Artist sits moping,
Nothing to hope in,
Picture displaced,
From the easel it graced?

3.
Bright, new idea,
Comes very clear,
Artist quick rushes,
To palette and brushes.

4.
A touch here and there,
A scene rises fair,
Showing—'tis true,
Features quite new.
Artist I see, as pleased as can be.

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RECONCILIATION.

Paul Reville and Jean Vernier, two well-known and favourite actors, hated each other cordially.

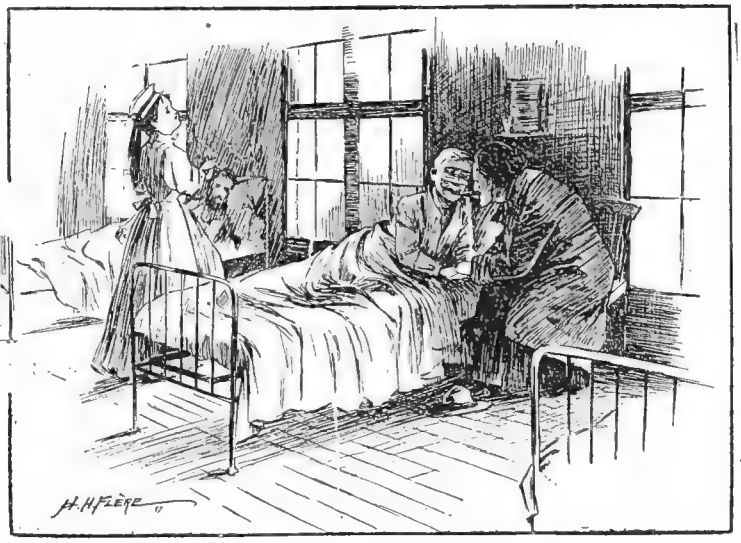
By a sort of fatality, as soon as either of these irreconcilable enemies undertook or created a *rôle*, he was sure to see the name of his adversary in bold type side by side with his own on the poster of the same theatre.

Both were always warmly received and applauded. Reville was irresistible in a *rôle* requiring personal beauty and noble bearing. Vernier seemed the very incarnation of meanness and treachery, the ideal scoundrel, hardened and impenitent. Regularly every evening towards twelve o'clock he was unmasked and crushed under the hee's of the righteous and fascinating Reville.

In their mutual desire to annihilate one another they occasionally reached sublimity.

At the Odéon they have been seen —Reville under the scarlet livery of Ruy-Blas, Vernier under the Spanish cloak of Don Salluste, pouring forth their romantic tirades with such splendid sonority and expression as to create breathless enthusiasm in the crowded audience.

Again at the Ambigu, they were together in *La Tour de Nesle* in *Le Bossu* and *Patrie*. Always associated, always receiving together the ovations of an enthusiastic public, always great artists of the old school, so much loved by our fathers, and always leaving on any *rôle* they assumed the mark of their masterly conception. They never exchanged a word, save before the footlights and during the long, laborious rehearsals. Then, entirely ignoring their own individuality, and projecting themselves each into his respective *rôle*, each eyeing and measuring the other with the air of a Spanish grandee, and each stimulating the other to his best, they would rise to the full height of their powers, astonishing and delighting their admiring fellow actors.



"My dear old friend!".

Neither had ever taken the hand of the other, and both had openly professed the same antagonism in real life that they had exhibited on the stage.

At the Actors' Club, if Vernier was alluded to in the presence of Reville, the latter simply hurled out the one word *cabotin* (strolling player), shrugging his shoulders contemptuously.

With Vernier, the epithet *pitre* was sufficient. He pronounced this word with an enjoyment quite indescribable, and after the manner of the pupils of the Conservatory, opened his mouth in the form of the circumflex accent, and rolled out the *r* with a tremendous vibration.

Reville was a widower. Vernier was unmarried. The wife of Reville had died young—of consumption—leaving a little girl, beautiful with the beauty of a Greuze.

When Vernier, who was a good deal of a bear, caught sight of his rival in the street, leading his little girl by the hand, he was half conscious of a softened feeling towards his hated enemy, and he would growl out in his deep voice:

"What a lucky fellow he is!" and his envious eyes would follow the happy father on his way to a confectioner's, to buy a crisp little cake for Cécile.

The Porte St. Martin had announced the reproduction of *The Mysteries of Paris* for a certain date, the principal *rôles* of "The Schoolmaster" and "Prince Rudolph" to be filled by Vernier and Reville.

The disgust of Vernier knew no bounds. *He* to have this vile *rôle*. *He* to serve as a mere foil to his rival, who, in his rich *robe-de-chambre*, with gold girdle and tassels, would have ample opportunity of displaying his manly beauty and "air noble" in full view of all the pretty women, while he, Vernier, in rags and an old fur cap, would be pelted with cabbages and execrations

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from the upper gallery, the wretch from the "quartier Muffetard" being held in utter detestation by the class frequenting that part of the house.

As the rehearsals proceeded, Vernier's indignation became more and more pronounced. Suddenly, there came a rumour of Reville's illness. He had contracted a violent cold, attacking the lungs, which were seriously affected, and the poor fellow was flat on his back in the City Hospital.

His place was filled by an understudy, and as all were somewhat eagerly awaiting the expression of Vernier's satisfaction in the new arrangement, he astonished everyone by showing himself more dissatisfied than before.

Early in the evening the audience became conscious of something quite unusual—*bizarre* Vernier was not himself; he forgot his lines, passed his cues, stumbled, hesitated.

It was soon manifest to all that he missed his old associate; that he was, in short, lost without Reville, who, by his disdain and overbearing manner, his airs of a *grand seigneur* had irritated him, aroused his temper, and spurred his ambition. Reville had indeed kindled the now sleeping fire of genius in the soul of this veteran of the melodrama.

As all were wondering and talking over this singular *contretemps*—were asking "What does this mean?"—it was learnt that poor Reville was rapidly becoming worse, his symptoms giving no hope of his recovery, and astonishment reached its climax as soon as it was known that Vernier was on his way to the hospital to see his rival.

When he rang the bell at the door it was with a shaking hand. He was conducted to the chamber, where Reville, with eyes half closed, lay in that partial sleep, in which the faintest sound, no louder than the fluttering of a butterfly's wings, is distinctly perceived.

Hearing a gentle step in the room, he half raised his head from the pillow, and, seeing Vernier, said with a smile:

"Ah, it is you. I knew you would come. I was expecting you."

Vernier, the fierce, treacherous, impenitent rascal of the melodrama, fell, rather than seated himself, in the chair at the head of the bed, saying in his deep bass voice: "My dear old friend!" half sobbing out the words.

"Come," said Reville, "embrace me."

Beautiful "Accolade!" Thirty years of mutual hatred lost in this supreme embrace! They remained closely clasped, each in the other's arms, looking into each other's friendly eyes, full of kindness and dimmed with tears.

Reville, raising himself on his elbow, said:

"You do not know how glad I am to see you. I cannot tell you the pleasure it gives me, for, after my child, have you not been all my life? Do you remember Ruy-Blas? 'I have the livery of a lackey, and you the soul of one?' And to think that all that is finished! To think, my old friend, how many times I have played at burying you on the stage, and that now you are to bury me in good earnest!"

And as Vernier made a slight gesture of denial, Reville continued:

"Oh, yes; I know it is only a question of time. It is a great comfort to see you here at my side and grieving for me, and I shall die content."

Here he was interrupted by a paroxysm of coughing; but, after resting a few moments, he added:

"No; content is not the word. I am leaving my child, my darling Cécile. It breaks my heart to feel that I shall never again feel her little arms about my neck, never again kiss her soft curls, and when I am gone what will she do? What will become of her? God help my darling! She has no one." And overcome by emotion, he gasped for breath as Vernier said gently and tenderly:

"I shall be here."

"You! Will you?"

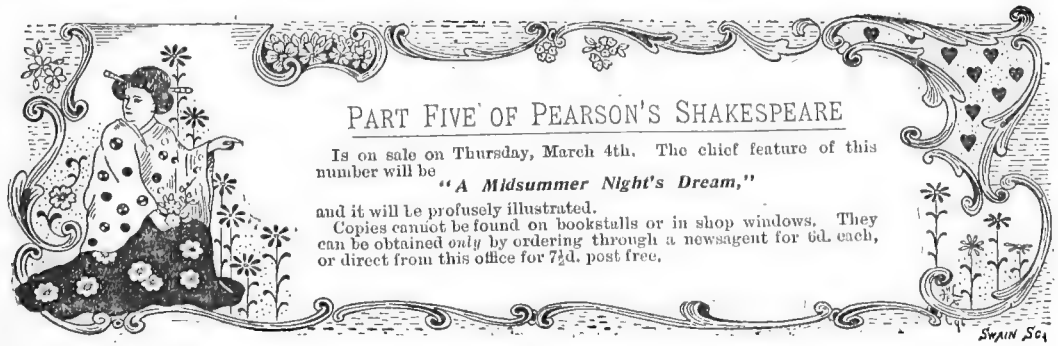
"Dear old friend, I am alone in the world; I have no no one to love. Give your child to me, I will be a father to her. Rest satisfied. She shall want for nothing. On my honour. By the memory of all our triumphs in the old days. I promise you to make her happy. I have means—much more than I need for nourishing the little creature. She shall never forget you. Your name and memory shall be dear and sacred to her. I cannot say all I feel—all I mean. Will you trust me? That is right. Your hand, old friend!"

Reville's face was radiant through his tears, and he said:

"This is the most perfect of melodramas."

The next day Reville was dead.

Auguste Faure.


PART FIVE OF PEARSON'S SHAKESPEARE
Is on sale on Thursday, March 4th. The chief feature of this number will be
"A Midsummer Night's Dream,"
and it will be profusely illustrated.
Copies cannot be found on bookstalls or in shop windows. They can be obtained only by ordering through a newsagent for 6d. each, or direct from this office for 7½d. post free.
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The Sunday Reader.

A NEW PAPER FOR THE HOME.

Sixteen pages of interesting reading matter, profusely illustrated by the best Artists of the day, for **ONE PENNY.**

On MARCH 4th the FIRST NUMBER

WILL BE PUBLISHED OF

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WHICH WILL BE A POPULAR RELIGIOUS JOURNAL, FULL OF INTERESTING STORIES, ARTICLES, AND ANECDOTES, AND WILL BE IN A VERY SPECIAL WAY A PAPER FOR THE HOME.

NOBODY need hesitate to place this new journal in the hands of his or her family. Even those who never attend a place of worship will find their homes made brighter and happier by the influence of **The Sunday Reader,** and the children will specially welcome this bright journal, because of the scores of opportunities it will afford them to secure handsome prizes in healthy and elevating competitions and examinations.

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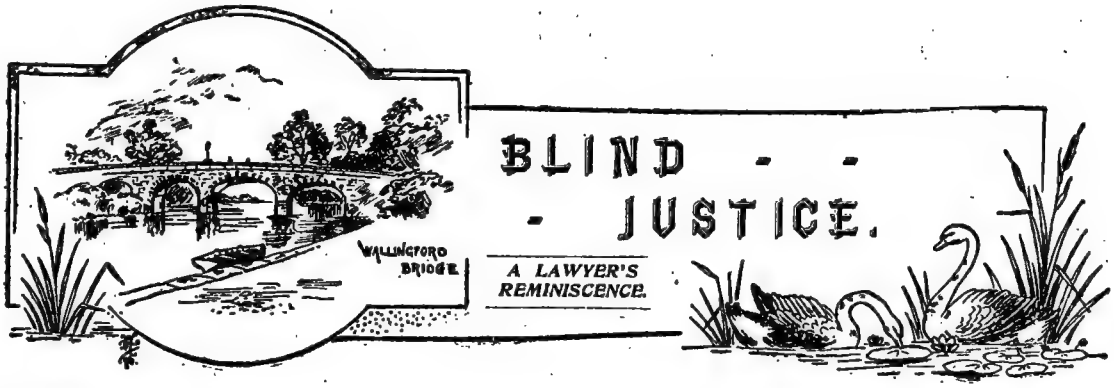

BLIND - - - JUSTICE.

A LAWYER'S REMINISCENCE.

"An innocent man need never be afraid to face a jury," so spoke a young lawyer but lately admitted.

"Well," said I, "from a layman's point of law, I think that if I thought the chances against me, no matter how innocent I were, I would decline the honour."

I had just dropped in for a friendly chat and smoke with my friend, Richard Boynton, an old lawyer well-known for an extensive *clientèle*. Turning to him, I said, as I lighted a cigar:

"What say you, Dick?"

"In theory, I agree with our young friend; in practice, with you."

Boynton added: "I'll give you a case in point if you like. It is about ten years ago when I was aroused about two o'clock in the morning by a messenger, the bearer of a hastily-scribbled note from a gentleman, an old client of mine. He was a childless widower, much interested in Egyptology, and consequently spent much of his time in Egypt. Being rich he could afford this expensive hobby. He was of a very quiet and retiring disposition, disliking all kinds of publicity or notoriety, and, like many studious men, was ofttimes very absent-minded.

"The note I received ran:

"'Dear Boynton,—They have brought me down here on some absurd charge or other. Come and arrange for my release immediately.—R. Rowley.'

"I hastened to the relief of my client. Now, I must tell you, he was very fastidious in his dress, and particularly natty and trim in his appearance. He wore a brown beard, cut in Vandyke fashion. Judge, then, of my astonishment when I was shown a man dressed in a particularly flashy style, of the kind affected by the sporting fraternity; a clean-shaved face, save for an inch or two of side whiskers. The man appeared to me to be a vulgar sporting man who had been out on a spree. Seeing me, he advanced rather unsteadily, and stammeringly said:

"'Ah, Boynton, get me out of this quick.'

"'There is some mistake,' I said to the policeman.

"'How?' asked he.

"'Why, this is not Mr. Rowley; this is not the gentleman I came to see.'

"'That's so? Well this is the man who gave me the note I sent up to you.'

"At this moment I looked up at the man before me and said:

"'You sent for me?'

"'Why, of course; who else should I send for?'

"'What made you use Mr. Rowley's name?'

"The man looked at me in amazement, and stutteringly replied:

"'R—R—Row—Rowley's n—n—name?'

"'Yes. Mr. Rowley's name,' I said impatiently.

"He clutched me by the sleeve, and gasped out:

"'Why, man—what do you mean? Do these clothes so alter me? Speak, Boynton!'

"I looked at him very keenly, and gradually there dawned on me that, after all, this was only my old friend Rowley.

"'Heavens! It is you, Rowley? What are you doing here? Come, man, compose yourself, and let's get at the bottom of this.'

"I sat down on the bench by his side, but, notwithstanding my cross-questioning, all I could get from him was nothing more than he had arrived the previous evening, had engaged a room at the Grand Hotel, had had some Welsh rarebit and a bottle of Bass, and had gone straight to bed. About midnight he had been aroused by a violent knocking at the door, and on opening it, had been gruffly told that he was under arrest, and that he was to dress pretty quickly.

"Hurried by the officers, he had hastily dressed himself, protesting uselessly that the clothes he was hustled in were not his, and was hurried off to the station. On his arrival there he had sent for me. No amount of cross-questioning could get him to vary or enlarge his story, nor could he give me the slightest reason for his arrest. As to his beard, that had easily been explained in answer to a question of mine. Owing to a slight skin eruption, contracted in Egypt, he had had it shaved off some time ago.

"The next step was to get him bailed out. This, I found, was not so easy a task. My non-recognition at first of my friend was against him. The magistrate next morning protested that this prisoner was a confidence man wanted for various offences, and that he was a certain Wilcox, *alias* Boucher, *alias* Palver, *alias* Moroney, and scoffingly declared he would not let him out under £500 bail. I did not stay to argue the matter out, but in less than an hour was back with a couple of friends of well-known wealth and standing. Bail was accepted. I carried my friend off in a cab to my house. Next morning my client was in a state of fever. I easily got a certificate from my physician exaggerating the illness.

"He remained in my house and in bed for nearly a week. During that time I found out enough to solve the mystery to my moral satisfaction, but not enough to convince a jury or even any outsider. The solution of the mystery was this. The man with the many *aliases*

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had come by the same train as my friend Rowley, had put up at the same hotel, and had been assigned a room on the same narrow corridor. By some chance my friend after supper had been given the key of Mr. Wilcox's room and had gone straight to bed. Mr. Wilcox's keen mind, ever bent on covering up his tracks, on finding that he had been given the wrong key, said nothing, examined my friend's bag, and then the idea evidently came to him that it would be a good thing if he could pass out of the hotel as Mr. Rowley.

"The probability was that he (Rowley) was in *his* room. To open the door was an easy trick for the thief. Then he must have taken my friend's attire, leaving his in its place. This affected, he paid his bill as Mr. Rowley, saying he was going to catch the night express north, and so he vanished.

"The question remained for me to prove that my friend was the real Rowley. I confess I saw immense difficulties in doing so promptly, and certainly not without great notoriety, mortifying to my friend, even if I succeeded.

"His resemblance in Wilcox's attire was so strikingly like the photos sent on to the police, and so unlike his own photos that the correspondence, papers, cards, and odds and ends which Wilcox had, either in his haste or intentionally, left in the coat and vest pockets, and which the police at the station had seized when they had searched him, that I shudderingly felt the chances were all in favour of a speedy conviction."

"What did you do?" asked the young lawyer.

"What did I do?" you ask. "I smuggled him off on a boat to America and forfeited the bail. He was, as I said, a rich man. It was the simplest way out of the difficulty and the surest.

"Still, my client, though perfectly innocent, is now a fugitive from justice." J. P. Mascott.

THE POISONED ARROW.

THE commanding officer was seated in the adjutant's office, in troubled parley with the officer of the day.

It was high noon, midsummer, and Arizona; and though the adobe was as cool as only an adobe can be in fiery weather, the Major was mopping his brow in entire discomfort.

"That's it, that's it!" he ejaculated. "Think of sending a man off on the very eve of his wedding; the very day before he is to be married. It's a beastly unpleasant thing to have to do, but I'm too old for a trip like that; Gowan's on the sick list, Henderson's away, Thompson's wife may die any minute, Trowbridge won't be back until early to-morrow morning, and you're half dead (precious hospital we have!) and officer of the day, besides. Then, moreover, Howland's about the only one who can handle those things right, and not make a mess of it. He's got to go, that's all."

He rang the bell for his orderly, and sent that unduly erect individual to find Lieutenant Howland, give him the commanding officer's compliments, and say he would like to see him in the adjutant's office immediately.

Presently Howland entered. He was the most promising officer in the regiment, and was tall and strong and homely. He had a square jaw and a straight mouth, and the jaw looked squarer and the mouth straighter just now. He foresaw something unpleasant when he caught sight of the Major.

"E-e-eh!" commenced the commanding officer, and dog-eared an official-looking document and straightened it out again. "Eh, Howland!"

"Well, sir?"

"Why—eh, I've got to ask you a deuced unpleasant thing, Howland."

"I will try to answer it, Major."

"Not a question, not a question. It's something I've got to ask you to do, and, by Jove, I'd rather be shot!"

"Anything I can do for you, I shall be most happy to do."

"See here. Everybody is sick or away, and I'm so old and fat, and Briggs is just out of a fever bed and hardly able to stand, you know, and someone has got to go up to the agency and quiet a fuss among the Apachés about the beef issue. Whoever goes has got to go now and get there in a hurry. I suppose I might attempt it, I suppose I might; but I'd make a mess of the business. I can't manage those bucks. I lose my temper too fast—and then I'm so fat!" said the Major sadly. "Briggs insists upon going, but, you see, he shouldn't. I won't allow him to. Don't you see how it is? There's only you available."

"Certainly, sir."

"I've got to ask you to do it to prevent a lot of trouble. I know you are to be married to-morrow, and it's the most disagreeable thing I ever had to do, to send you away to-day. But you see how it is," he reiterated.

"Of course, I see, sir, and I'll go—not exactly with pleasure—but still, I'll go. I can get back by noon to-morrow—and that'll give me time to shave and dress," he added with a grim smile.

They discussed the matter at some length, and Howland went to get on his scouting clothes for the long, hot ride through dust as dry as flour, and to say good-bye to Captain Trowbridge's youngest daughter.

Like the princess of fairy lore, she was as good as she was beautiful, and had light hair and brown eyes, and dimples, and clinging, feminine ways. Howland was badly in love; had been for several years, but many things had happened to prevent his marriage. At first he had had a mother and sister to support on a second-lieutenant's pay; then the sister had married, and his mother had died, so his fortune was all his own; but at that time Doris Trowbridge was engaged to marry another man.

When she found that she cared more for Howland than for her *fiancé*, she broke the engagement, and was meek and tearful and ashamed of herself for a month, until she and Howland arranged things satisfactorily between them. They were to have been married six months before, but Howland was ordered off as scout; and three months after that she had been at the point of death; so now, though the season was unpropitious, they had determined to take time by the forelock, make the most of the chance visit of a clergyman, and be married in the middle of July.

At this juncture Howland was being sent away, and he grew desperate.

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Nevertheless, he said good-bye to little Miss Trowbridge with exemplary calmness, and was more careful than she not to show depression.

"You'll come back, surely, won't you?" she begged.

"Of course I will, goosey. Don't I go to the agency on an average of twice a month nearly all the time?"

"I know. But somehow this seems different."

Howland agreed with her, but he laughed at her for all that.

"It's like the legend of Sir Olaf, isn't it? He went away the night before he was to be married, and an erl maiden made him die."

"There's nothing so fascinating as an erl maiden at the agency, more's the pity," he told her.

Then he went and rode off under the scorching sun in a cloud of dust, two soldiers behind him.

The girl watched him until she could see him no longer, and then went back into the tent to sit with a white face and closed lips and dry eyes, looking at the sands of the parade-ground.

* * * * *

Howland held a long council with the chiefs, and very nearly succeeded in settling the difficulties before nightfall. They talked, sitting under a shelter of willow sticks and branches. There was a half-cured ox-hide on the ground, upon which they squatted.

Two of the Indians played monte with a pack of grotesque raw-hide cards, and one whittled a stick for an arrow-shaft. They liked Howland, and they trusted him. This was known, so missions of the sort usually fell to him. He talked now, and waxed very eloquent, and the chiefs grunted as the interpreter translated. They were almost won to him, but they postponed their decision until they should have time to talk matters over, so they bade him return after dark. Howland went away, after having given the daughter of one of the bucks a bright handkerchief, and having said a few words to her out of his scanty vocabulary. The girl looked at him intently, with her little, bird-like eyes twinkling, and said nothing in reply, but smoothed the bandanna on her knees. When he was gone she rose and stood in front of her tepee to watch him out of sight, as the fair-haired white woman had done a few hours before.

After a time she put the handkerchief on her head and went in the direction he had taken.

When she found him it was dusk, and the coyotes had begun to whine and bark all about them, and one faint star glimmered in the purpling sky. Her eyes were wonderfully bright, and her wild gracefulness would have been alluring to another man.

She went up behind him and touched him on the shoulder. He faced about, and asked what she wanted. But for the bright handkerchief on her head he would not have remembered her. When he saw that, he smiled, and the girl, encouraged, began a protestation of desperate, savage love, in the most even of voices and broken of English, interspersed with Apaché and Mexican.

Howland answered her kindly, and, to her calm-toned pleadings, smiled in her tense face and turned away.

"*Poco tiempo*, you come," she said, gliding after him and grasping his hand. She followed him for a few yards. "You come?" she insisted.

"Yes, *poco tiempo*, I come to see your father."

She flung his hand from her and hurried off into the shadow with a low snarl.

Late at night, as Howland left the council of the braves, a hundred yards from the camp, a woman strode up to him, and, without any preface, dropped at his feet and caught his hands and repeated the story of her savage passion in the same monotone.

But Howland had completed his embassy successfully, and was in haste to return to the camp during the night and comparative coolness, so he pushed her away with a disgusted "*Vamoose!*" and hurried on.

* * * * *

Years ago there were still poisoned arrows used occasionally—weapons deadlier than the more popular rifle or carbine, for their scratch was fatal. The head was dipped in a poison curiously made. A bit of liver, quite putrid, was held before a rattlesnake until he had injected his venom into it time and time again. After a few more days this virulent substance was put upon the points of the arrows, to carry agony and dissolution to whatever they touched.

It was one of these arrows that Howland jerked from his arm, a few moments later, as he went into the hut where his two soldiers were waiting.

He held it in front of the candle and examined it intently, while the blood dripped over his dusty boot. One of the men asked him how it happened, while he cut open the sleeve. "A mistake, very likely. It was not one of the bucks; we parted good friends." The woman he did not mention. He looked at the arrow again.

"It's poisoned, I fancy. Rather hard luck," he said. He passed one hand across his face wearily, and repeated: "Hard luck!" Then he gave the men a detailed account of what he had done and accomplished, that they might tell the Major in case he himself should be past speaking. The agency doctor was off on a two days' hunting trip, so the soldiers bathed and dressed the wound, and made Howland drink the contents of a large flask of whisky. But he ordered his horse and went back to the post, nevertheless, across the long, gleaming plain of sand, under the purple arch with its stars of glimmering gold; three weird, dark figures following the road through the night.

And just as the grey of dawn came over the far off black mountains, just as the dawn breeze sprang up and blew on his swollen and burning face, just as the first call for reveille shrilled through the valley, two dust-whitened riders, supporting him in his saddle, drew up at the hospital.

At two o'clock a stretcher carried the body of Lieutenant Howland from the hospital to his quarters and the flag was put at half-mast.

Gwendolen Overton.

A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.

On page 313 several sketches are given in their proper order. £2 is offered to the reader who sends us the most appropriate wording to go under each sketch, the whole to form a story descriptive of the illustrations, and a bottle of Home Notes Bouquet will be given to each of the senders of the next best five attempts.

It is not necessary for competitors to have any literary ability. If you have a good idea, surely there should be no difficulty in putting it down in words. The whole of the story is limited to one hundred words, which may be distributed under the sketches according to the judgment of the competitor.

All that you have to do is to write in the order of the sketches the wording that you think most appropriate, enclose your attempt in an envelope (which should be marked "Picture Story"), and forward it to this office before Monday, March 8th.

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Pearson's Picture Puzzles.

No. 1. ONE HUNDRED POUNDS IN PRIZES.

IN the current number of PEARSON'S WEEKLY you will find ten pictures. They represent the names of ten well-known Actors and Actresses on the Dramatic and Music-Hall Stage. This is a competition that requires no explanation. If you will look at the accompanying picture you will see the reply is Beerbohm Tree. Who are the other people?

Write down their names in the spaces provided, and then keep the list till three other sets appear. When you have filled in the lists for four weeks send the four sheets to us in one envelope, addressed

"Pictures," Pearson's, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

But remember the sheets must come to us four in one envelope. Don't be discouraged if you cannot find forty names, fill in thirty-five, thirty, or even less. Others may be no more clever than yourself.

1st PRIZE.	£50 in Gold.
2nd PRIZE.	A £10 Bank of England Note.
3rd, 4th, and 5th PRIZES.	£5 Bank of England Notes.
6th to 20th PRIZES. . .	Fifteen Sovereigns.
21st to 40th PRIZES. .	Twenty Half-Sovereigns.

No. 1.—Beerbohm Tree.

DO YOU WANT A WATCH?

On February 18th we wound up a watch and placed it in a safe. It was wound up somewhere between the hours of four and six in the afternoon. It is supposed to run down in about thirty-six hours. If you want this watch, which is a superior article, manufactured by **Mr. HENRY E. PECK, of 71, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.**, and sold by him at five guineas, all you have to do is to mark the time at which you think it will stop on the clock face herewith, and on the line left for that purpose. You may make any number of attempts for this prize, but each one must be on a separate clock-face.

Magnificent English Lever Watch, ¾-plate movement, jewelled in eight holes, chronometer balance, plain or engine-turned cases, crystal glass, five years' warranty with each watch.

The prize will be given to that competitor who draws the hands pointing most nearly to the hour and minute at which it is found the watch in our safe has stopped.

There is no entrance fee required, but no competition will be accepted unless traced on the diagram herewith.

In the unlikely event of two competitors being correct, the watch will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt first reaches this office.

Competition closes ***Monday, March 8th.*** Address attempts:

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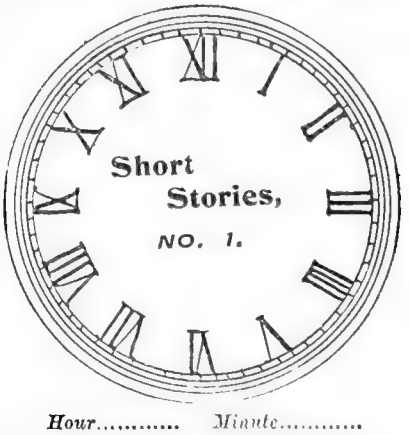

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A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.—No. 5.

SEE PAGE 311.

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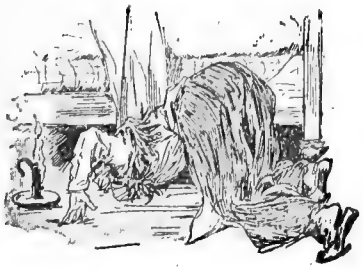

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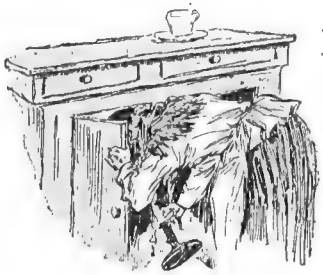

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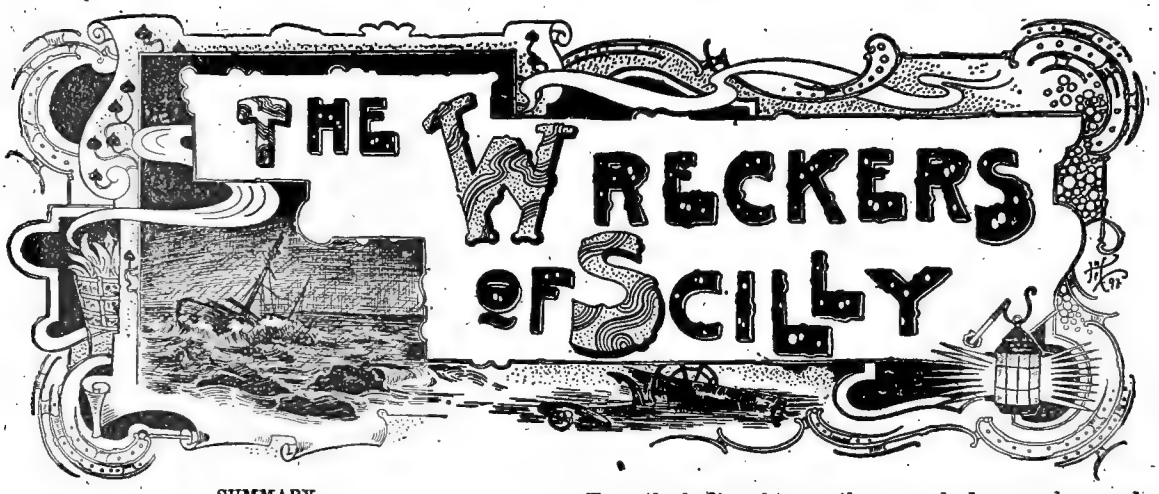

SUMMARY.

The scene is laid at St. Agnes, one of the Scilly Islands. The inhabitants live by the booty obtained from vessels wilfully led to destruction by false beacons. The only two exceptions are Nigel Prideaux and Damaris Nance, his sweetheart. Manuel Nance, Damaris' father, is Nigel's greatest enemy. The *King Hal*, a warship laden with Spanish plunder, is lured to destruction, and wrecked off Troy Town. All hands are either drowned in the sea or killed by the inhabitants, except Sir Francis Seymour, who is rescued by Nigel. Damaris takes food to the survivor, who falls in love with her. Nigel secures Sir Francis' escape. Manuel Nance decides to give his daughter in marriage to one of the sons of Governor Layton, and for this purpose sends one of his men to convey the offer. The big dowry which is to accompany the girl creates dissention among the Governor's six sons, and they decide to swim across to the island on which she lives, the first arrival to become her husband. While Nance and his men are rowing over to Hugh Town to fetch Master Layton, the boat capsises and all are drowned.

CHAPTER X.

The New Chief of St. Agnes.

There was deep sorrow in St. Agnes for many days after this catastrophe. It could not have been otherwise. The drowned men had not been exemplary Christians; but they were fathers of families, and their wives and children felt all natural affection for them.

At one swoop, the population of the island was reduced from forty-five to twenty-eight. But three males were left in the land: Nigel, his faithful idiot, Ban, and the child, Obadiah.

Under these circumstances, it fell to Nigel to assume a sort of temporary lordship in St. Agnes. Of governmental duties, of course, he had none. But youthful ambition was stirred within him; and he took upon himself to see that the women and girls lacked no food that could be got by the aid of his hands from the ocean.

This seemed the more imperative as no boat came to them from St. Mary's until the third day after the accident. The sea, though calm in other parts, ran with a furious speed in the channel between these two islands. It was, said the women-folk, who were ever prone to detect in extraordinary events the agency of some malignant force, the work of the spirits of the dead men of the *King Hal*. But little of this ill-fated ship now remained in the position where it originally struck. The new storm had wrought fresh havoc upon it, and again the strand of St. Warna's Bay was overcast with jetsam. For the time, however, the survivors of St. Agnes took no interest in the things. They let them lie (bales and boxes, and even the bodies of a bullock and a man) as if they were no longer concerned with aught but their own bereavement.

In such a state did Master Layton and his son Eric find the island when at length they came into it.

The Governor was aghast to hear what had happened. True, the bodies of two or three men had gone ashore under the Fort Hill of St. Mary's, and given warning of some calamity. But that all the able-bodied males of the island save one should be cut off in the twinkling of an eye was almost past belief.

Yet his worship's distress was, sooth to say, quite as much on account of the gold that had sunk as for the sake of the men or their widowed wives.

He was quick to interrogate Nigel about the other property of Master Nance. Here, however, he did not profit greatly. For, in the meantime, our hero had talked with the women of Agnes, and had persuaded them to view their loss as in some sort a judgment for the cruel deeds their husbands had wrought in their lifetimes. By this one brief, sharp blow the Almighty had chastised the men, and so shielded them from the worse fate that would in eternity have been theirs had they continued to work such evil.

It was not sound theology, nor even impeccable reason. But it did not displease the poor souls. And in keeping with the idea, each wife had surrendered such precious things as her house contained, and especially the treasures of the *King Hal*, into the hands of Nigel. With this rich produce and the far richer spoil of the dwelling of Nance, it was proposed to ask the intercession of the noble Lord Abbot of Tavistock. Heaven would not, it was thought, be deaf to their pleading on behalf of the souls of the dead men, if the prayers were so generously supported. Only the plunder of the *King Hal* did Nigel keep apart from the rest, for he remembered Sir Francis Seymour's words thereanent.

Master Christopher Layton thus found himself baffled. He could not aver directly that there was treasure in St. Agnes, though his suspicions were more than strong. And in the evening he returned to St. Mary's in no very sweet frame of mind.

Nor was young Master Eric quite contented with the day's events. For the first time he found himself face to face with the damsel to whom he was to have been wedded.

The blue eyes and graceful form of Damaris awoke in him a passion he hitherto had not dreamt of. She did not greet him as a bridegroom. Indeed, she forbade him even to speak to her—for was she not in weeds for her father? But while she was within reach of him he let his eyes wander over her with such a flame of eagerness in them that Nurse Cochran could hardly keep her hands off him.

Yet in the end, when it transpired that she was now a portionless bride, what must his father do but scorn the notion that he should still regard this beauty as his wife in future.

It was in vain that he protested, vowed he would not live

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without her, and so forth, after the manner of hot, impulsive youths. Master Layton made a jest of him.

"Silly calf—'twas not her beauty thou wast about to wed, but her money bags. Since these be gone, thou mightest as well eat the pot the bread's baked under as mate her emptiness. Beauty, quotha! a fine thing in sooth. Look at the carcass of a cow thrice weeks in the salt sea, and then prate of the merits of skin charms!"

"I'll do it, though thou talk thy tongue out," was the youth's angry rejoinder.

"Marry, and so thou shalt, an it please thee, and be lord of St. Agnes to boot—a fine lordship, with nigh a score of lone womenfolk to aid thee—'twill suit thy talents, my son! But yet, remember the damsel is in distress. It were ill manners even in thee to vex her with thy enquiry this month or more—so come away and drink a jug of canary on it."

Though well-nigh speechless with rage, the youth could do no less than acknowledge the propriety of what his father said on the subject of his wooing. And so with a sulky muttering he returned to the boat, and St. Agnes was again left in peace.

These few days had wrought a strange alteration in Dame Cochran's estimate of Nigel.

At first she was for scoffing at him in his assumed posi-

He was quick to interrogate Nigel.

tion as head of the island. But his concern for the widowed women, and his untiring efforts to hearten the spirits of them all, won her admiration.

Only in the matter of the island's reformation was she at discord with him. She was not, she said, so eager to hand over the souls of her ancestry to the arch fiend in the nether world. She mocked at the thought that there was so much amiss in the island traditions and the habits that had come down to them. If they cut the throats of strangers who set foot on their land, they were acting but in self-defence. What right had these or any to invade a land without a "Pray thee, may we?" For the rest, what difference was there in the long run between a slit throat and a drowned man? As for the money and valuables on derelicts, they were as much the property of the finder as the egg a fowl lays is the property of the hen's owner. Nor was it so very heinous a sin to light a fire on a headland, which might serve as much to warn as to misguide a ship.

But this same good soul was not a whit averse to conciliating Heaven with some of the treasures of the island. There was no harm, she admitted, in thus making sure of the dead men's well-being in Purgatory. The harvest of the Atlantic was rich enough to license even such extravagance. And she hoped wisdom would yet come upon Master Prideaux, to enable him to see that he did no wrong in accepting the gifts proffered by the waves. Was it not a fair duello? At one time the sea thought well to snatch away eighteen lives at a stroke. Surely the least they could do was to receive what trifles at other times it offered them in compensation!

But to all this of course Nigel shook his head.

Damaris herself was the first to enlighten the old woman about her love for the acting lord of St. Agnes; and this news, too, did not come with such a shock.

"I'd rather see thee Mistress Prideaux than Mistress Pert Layton, wench," she said. "And when all's said there's little choice left if thou art to wed one of thine own people—a thing that is ever much to be advised. Further, there be three other marriageable maidens in the island, and I would not that either of those gawbies took the one proper man we have, and left thee wanting."

"Dear nurse," said Damaris in reply to this, "thou'rt fonder of me than I fancied, and the hearing of thee has made me happier than I have been this many an hour."

"'Tis a rule, wench, worth thy minding, that a rough tongue's more oft than not the voucher of an honest heart. Troth, I'm not perfect."

"And yet thou'rt not so far from it."

"Hearken to her. She says I'm perfect, or nigh it. Marry, then I must e'en do what the others do, and ascribe it to that fine wooer of thine who works changes in us all."

This with a little jesting laugh, though in no ill spirit.

But Damaris chose to regard it as a confession of fact.

"Therein, sweet nurse, I am at one with thee. My Nigel is matchless."

"And so art thou to think him so," was the rejoinder, with another laugh and a shake of the head.

Thus the days ran by, and the women began to turn their minds less and less upon their trouble. The middle of July was past, and again unkindly weather blew over the black rocks of the isles. The nights, too, grew longer, though not much, and some of the dames talked freely to each other of the terror of the coming winter, with no mankind to stand 'twixt them and the storms, and the fear of starvation that was worse than the worst of storms.

A St. Warna's Day came and went. For the first time in many years the Saint was bereft of her ritual. None went down to the Bay—nor was a single sacrificial pin cast into the muddy water of the well. Young Obadiah had been of less lively mood since his adventure on the evening of that twenty-sixth of June. It was but rarely he sang at all now; and never the hymn of which he had formerly been so fond.

Nigel had resolved again and again to take boat across to St. Mary's and there journey with others to the mainland, past St. Martin's and the Eastern Isles. But Damaris and his own doubts kept him at home. How could he so dissemble his purpose in visiting the Abbot of Tavistock as to quiet such qualms or suspicions as might

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arise in Master Layton? Besides, it is not easy to carry a large sum of money without the chink of it betraying itself.

For these and other reasons, Nigel deferred his

Her head was pointed straight for the little haven.

expedition. And of all the hindrances that worked on him, none was more potent than the thought that in his absence young Layton might sail to St. Agnes, and carry off Damaris by main force.

On these grounds he had said to his sweetheart: "I will not leave Agnes without thee, or until we be duly wed, and there be some here to lift a hand in thy aid if any come to molest thee."

To which Damaris had replied that since it was so, she cared not whether they were wed or no. All she desired was the continual presence of her Nigel. What could it signify to her happiness whether they were or were not linked fast by Church ceremony, with Book and ring? She could not be more joyful of soul than she was—and this notwithstanding the occasional sadness that possessed her as she thought of her father and his end.

In truth they were bright days for both of them. There was none to say to them, "Thou shalt not do this," or, "Do this in despite of thy wishes." And many an hour, free for the time from broader anxiety, did Nigel pass with pretty Damaris on the velvety downs which spring inland from the granite cliffs.

CHAPTER X.

And so They Lived Happy ever After.

One bright, calm morning, with only a sigh of wind from the east, there stole into the channel between St. Mary's and St. Martin's a stately vessel full four score feet from stem to stern.

A month had gone by since the wreck of the *King Hal* on St. Agnes, and no such vessel as this had since appeared in the waters of Scilly.

There was excitement in Hugh Town when it was seen that her head was pointed straight for the little haven. At that distance it could not be seen whether she was of English make, or whether she was one of the pirate craft of Spain or France.

By-and-bye, however, the pennons fluttering from her tall masts told that she was a royal ship. The fair arms of old England floated in the clear air, and beneath them was a dragon with a forked tail, which Master Layton knew for the heraldic bearing of his late guest, Sir Francis Seymour.

Slowly the good ship walked through the pool towards the haven. Even the tide did not this day seem to aid her much. But at length, after a cannon shot which awoke echoes from many a rock far and near, and sent the gulls shrieking into the air, she dropped her anchor within two hundred yards of the shore. Master Layton, in his little boat, was already alongside her, and tendered a very hearty welcome to the guest whom he had so lately speeded from his island.

"I bear a Royal Commission, my good friend," said the knight, "and will say somewhat for your own ear when, with your leave, I have broken my fast."

Of the nature of this commision we need add little. It was concerned with the redistribution of certain of the lands of the islands when the dissolution of the monasteries (then brewing) might be expected. Sir Francis himself had a large grant of the monastic territory in the Isles. The Abbot of Tavistock, like the rest, was to be well shorn of his wealth.

In the course of light talk, after dinner, Master Layton spoke of the depopulation of St. Agnes, and the terrible manner of it.

Sir Francis was interested. But his interest became such when he heard young Nigel Prideaux was left sole man in the island, that the Governor of St. Mary's wondered not a little.

"Then your Excellency knows the youth?" he suggested.

"I know none I esteem more—of his kind," answered the knight.

He would not further be drawn on the subject, though it was observed, after inquiring about the girl named Damaris, that he puffed his lips and looked elated, like one with a brave idea in his head. He learnt too that it was this same damsel who was to have been the prize of the eccentric contest he had by chance initiated—whereupon he had

They came upon Damaris.

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frowned, and trifled restlessly with his moustache, which he wore short, and turned after the Italian mode.

There was much in his visit which perplexed and even troubled Master Layton; but he knew not what to do or say in mitigation of his anxiety. The King's Sign Manual was not to be questioned.

On the morrow, upon a placid sea veined with lines as if snails had trodden over it, and left their mark, Sir Francis was escorted across to St. Agnes. He was accompanied by Master Layton, the Governor's two eldest sons, and others. With the party was Father Harris from Tresco, who was in Hugh Town at the time, and craved a passage that he might take the church's consolations with him to the widowed women and orphans.

"Who knows, sir priest," said the knight somewhat cavalierly. "Thou mayest have more duties than thou wottest of, and some of a various kind."

But to this Father Harris said nothing, for he had word of the reason of Sir Francis' coming into the Isles, and was careful not to anger him.

No sooner were they landed in Perkilla Bay than young Eric Layton craved permission to run on ahead to give warning of their visit. But Sir Francis said "Nay" to him—there was that in his face which told Master Eric that the knight was no favourer of his suit with Damaris. Yet it did not dishearten him; for what can it matter, he asked himself, to a nobleman whom the wench marries?

A**n, h*****r, w**n of a s****n t**y a*l c**e u**n D******s h*****f,s****d w**h h*r w******n w**k in a g****y h****w, w**h r***s b******n h*r a*d t*e s*n, t*e L****n y***h h*d to c****e h*s m**d a*******y. T*e l***t of r**********n on t*e g****s f**r f**e m**e h*m t***k t*e k****s c***********r m***t e**n be h*s r***l.

"Sweetest of sweet Penelopes!" exclaimed the knight, as he bent and kissed her hand—she going rose-red to her ear tips the while—"may eternal fire have me if I do not aid thee towards thy Ulysses."

All which was Hebrew to the bystanders, and indeed to Damaris herself—though she knew by her heart that it meant no ill to her.

Then the womenfolk of the island gathered and surrounded the party. They mourned their losses afresh, and shed tears; nor would they take comfort from Father Harris, whose words had a scholarly cast they cared not for. Only when mention was made of Nigel did their countenances clear at all. With one voice they belauded "Master Prideaux" as their true friend.

"By St. Jago of Compostella," exclaimed Sir Francis, with a light laugh, "your cavalier, fair Damaris, will have to play the Turk. 'Tis much to be hoped thou art complacent and not of a jealous humour."

This time the girl smiled, for she caught his meaning. There was compliment to Nigel in his words. She could forgive his allusions for the sake of that.

Afterwards they all went toward St. Warna's Bay, and the site of the wreck of the *King Hal* was regarded with lowering brows by Sir Francis. The distress of that fatal night was renewed in him as he beheld the cruel rocks and the splinters and other wreckage on the stones.

"Where is this Master Nigel?" he asked imperiously. "I have an account to settle with this accursed island."

They said he was still out at sea in his boat after the fish; and with him was little Obadiah Hicks.

"A pretty land in sooth," scoffed the knight gaily. "With a score and more of dames and virgins in the keeping of an idiot!"

And so they strolled on, and their steps led them to the grassy curve which ended in an inlet on the north side of Troy Town headland.

Sir Francis lifted his head briskly, and then glanced at Damaris, whom he had kept by his side.

"Methinks," he said softly, "thou and I, child, have been here before. And, by my faith, it was a well tasting capon, and the sweeter for being carried near that tender heart of thine!"

"'Twas this very spot," rejoined Damaris. "Yon rock like a sheep's head faced thee, did it not, from the cave?"

And so they strolled on.

"Marry it did, and finely I wearied of thy hard sheep's head ere that stout lad of thine took me in hand. May my right arm rot from my body if I forget it."

But at this moment there was a sound of much talking behind them, and, turning, they saw the women of St. Agnes and Nigel himself, and after them they were dragging a hand-cart, which seemed more burdensome than its load would have argued it.

The knight stepped back, and offered both his hands to our hero.

"Good Nigel, I rejoice to see thee," he said most courteously, so that Damaris was like to kiss him for his kindness. "But what have these dames brought me?"

"The fragments of thy lost ship, Sir Francis—in all, some thirty thousand gold pieces, and other curios."

The knight said not a word at first, but looked from Nigel to the boxes, and then at Master Layton.

After which he abruptly slapped Nigel on the shoulder. "Thou art a marvel of a boy," he exclaimed; "indeed," he added, with a merry, wicked smile, "thou'rt a pair of wonders, and beshrew me if I'll rob the world of its chance of a progeny of such. As for you, sir" (to Master Eric), "you may sing your '*dimittis in pace*,' for you've lost her. Stay, I like not the blackness of your countenance. You be men of hard and reckless lives in these islands, and I've not faith in all of you. I pray you withdraw a pace or two, save only Master Prideaux, whom I hereby name Lord of St. Agnes by Royal Grant under my hand, and also save the Demoiselle Damaris Nance."

The knight had to repeat his request before it was fully complied with. Then the Laytons and the womenfolk of St. Agnes gave way.

"Now then, young people," said Sir Francis, "you have seen one token of my goodwill toward you. I'd fain give you a second. There's yon priest of Tresco here to hand, and I will rejoice to play the part of bride-father. Come,

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say the word, and we'll have you tied up for life this very hour."

Perhaps Nigel would have accepted this proposal without demur had it been made to him alone. The opportunity was at least a good one, and he was so light at heart to perceive that he had a friend who was more puissant than the Governor of St. Mary's.

But the blushes on Damaris' downcast face held him reluctant.

"It were ill done to hurry her," he said gently.

"Methinks I know maiden nature better than thou, good Nigel," was the knight's smiling rejoinder. "It may be 'no' at the mouth with them, but I vow to thee it's 'yes' at the heart on such times as these. And it's the man who reads their hearts first and their tongues' words only by the light of them—it's that man who does best for them—and, by my soul, best for himself too. Dost take me?"

This discourse seemed to encourage Nigel — he advanced and took the girl's hand.

"Sweetheart," he whispered, "wilt be my bride this very hour? I'll view thy silence as consent."

Sir Francis heard and laughed loud. "Thou'lt make a good lord, Master Prideaux, for thou hast strategy in thy composition, as well as truth and honour, and such goodness as I would were more common elsewhere in the world. She'll stay as dumb as a post, mark if she do not."

And so she did. Whereupon Nigel put her hand upon his arm and they both stood before the knight. The girl had raised her face towards her bridegroom when Sir Francis called for Father Harris—and there was such a light, contented smile upon it that he could hardly refrain from clasping her in his arms in public.

Thus, on the green turf, under the blue sky, with the babble of the sea on the shingle in their ears, and with all the people of St. Agnes and the three Layton men about them, Nigel and Damaris were married. And at a word from Father Harris, after the ceremony, all went on their knees, with their faces toward the Bay of St. Warna, and the priest besought the Almighty to bless the island of St. Agnes and all its inhabitants, and to put right instincts into their hearts. To which prayer the knight in particular uttered a resounding "Amen," with unrestrained shaking of the head as he looked sternly towards the rocks on which the *King Hal* had been lured. But his face lost its severity when he marked the boxes of gold, and he gave the bride and her groom great congratulations on their alliance.

The St. Agnes women, too, pressed forward, and Dame Cochran in the van of them, to offer their blessing also to Nigel and Damaris. The event pleased them mightily upon the whole. And Dame Cochran in particular could not refrain from looking impudently at young Layton, with a toss of her old head. But Master Eric had ere this begun to laugh as if he cared not at heart for his own discomfiture. He was a youth of volatile and pliable nature, and he jeered at himself for his recent earnestness as if it had been a folly.

They burnt it to the ground.

"There's one thing more," said Sir Francis, when he had begun to move towards the Bay to leave the island. "In due time I will send thee, my Nigel, a company of stout-limbed youths, like thyself, to reinstate the island. They will have a word to look to thee for their headship; for their wives they need also, I trow, look not out of St. Agnes. By my troth, widows are not to be sneered at. They are like autumn plums, than which I know naught more to my taste. But such maids as thou, fair Damaris, are — as methinks I have said before—incomparable."

Then, with many expressions of his lasting goodwill, Sir Francis left St. Agnes in the keeping of its new lord. Master Layton and the others also parted with Nigel as with a person of some great distinction.

* * * * *

That evening the wedding feast in St. Agnes was celebrated. And afterwards, ere bedtime, with a silvery moon in a quiet sky, they all repaired to the Bay of St. Warna, and, kindling a bonfire round the post which had of old served them as the centre of their heathen dances, they burnt it to the ground. The well of St. Warna they choked with the big stones they rolled into it, and at this task no one was so industrious as little Obadiah Hicks.

A new and a happier era had begun for the isle of St. Agnes.

The End.

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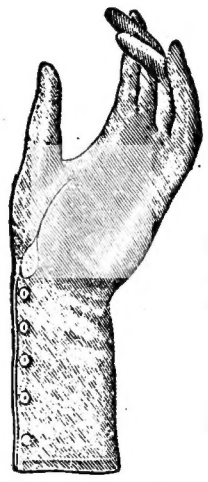

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Windsor Hotel, Merthyr Vale, South Wales.—Mr. J. THOMAS writes: "When I started the Tablets I weighed 17st., and have got down to 14st. 9lb."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.—Mr. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 13st."

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Answers to Correspondents.

P. L. S. wants to know why champagne can be manufactured only in certain parts of France.———The champagne district in France has a peculiar conformation of soil—loam and stones mixed. There is no similar soil suitable for vine culture in any other country, or in any other part of France, and, as a consequence, this small area in the north-west of the French Republic has retained its celebrity for centuries.

A. A. G.—32,000 varieties of goods are manufactured from wool.

J. S. T.—Opinions differ as to which is the most sensitive part of the body. It is usually supposed to be the tip of the tongue, but those engaged in polishing billiard balls, or any other substances requiring a very high degree of smoothness, invariably use the cheek bone for detecting signs of roughness.

U. I. C. E.—You are suffering from an overpowering dose of self-consciousness. It is a malady that frequently attacks young men of your age. You imagine that everybody is drinking in every word you say, and noting your every movement, while really they are not taking the least notice of you. There is no remedy for such a trouble. The only thing is to wait until you outgrow it.

Ben.—The "Adventures of Mr. Alfred Juggins" will be published in book form.

F. R. stammers. He wants to know of a cure.———Tap or beat time with the finger at every syllable pronounced, either in reading—which should always be aloud—or speaking. By so doing the most inveterate stammerer will be surprised at the immediate result, and with long and constant practice no impediment will be found to fluent speaking. Also, if you will carefully note, when reading aloud, that there are certain letters which, more particularly as initials, make speaking difficult, you will find that the sound of other letters can either be substituted or pronounced so as to remove the difficulty. Thus Y and U are especially obnoxious. Say Eeankee for Yankee, Eeouth for Youth, etc. By care and patience you will find this of great assistance.

C. D. D.—You may make an excellent lubricating and burning oil and embrocation compound from the following recipe: One ounce of camphorated oil, three ounces of sperm oil, and four ounces of vaseline oil. Mix the whole together, and colour with a little alkanet.

Cavendo Tutus.—Impossible to say which is the best sea-side town for investing in boarding-houses. Rising places are best, and these are not at all difficult to find.

L. T. is going bald, and wants to know of a simple remedy.———Try glycerine, whisky, and quinine. They should be mixed. Don't give yourself the whisky, your wife the quinine, and your baby the glycerine. This will probably result in the loss of heir. Rub the mixture into the scalp every morning.

Mrs. J. L. T. is in a quandary. She recently advertised for a cook, and amongst the replies was one from a person with excellent recommendations and in every way satisfactory. Arrangements were made for her to take up her position in the house, and she arrived the other day with her trunk and a bicycle. Mrs. J. L. T. remonstrated with her new menial, who in return insisted in either stopping or receiving a month's salary in lieu of notice. My correspondent wants to know if she can legally prevent the cook from bringing her dirty bicycle right through the front door, and keeping it in the kitchen.———I'm sorry, but no questions of a legal or medical nature will be answered in these columns. You had better consult some respectable lawyer in the matter. If he thinks you are wrong, the quietest, quickest, and, perhaps, in the end, the most economical course to pursue, would be to pay the woman the balance of her wages and pack her off. This peculiar case opens up the possibility of a new occupation for women. In the event of its legality being proved, there is nothing to prevent a servant from bringing an elephant or a pantechnicon van full of goods into the house of her employer, on the ground that they are part of her belongings.

M. F. D.—There is a railway between Cronstadt and Oranienbaum which is laid upon the ice.

G. C. S.—A cigarette smoker sends into the air about 4,000,000,000 particles of dust at every puff.

Dreamer.—You never see *Pearson's Shakespeare* about because it is not exposed for sale in shops or on bookstalls.

H. T. L. M. (Doncaster).—The brain of the ant is larger in proportion to its body than that of any other animal.

Lucy.—It is not for me to say whether *Home Notes Bouquet* is better than the one you mention. You'd better sample both, and judge for yourself.

A Constant Reader.—I know of no instance in which the winner of the Derby has been known at any London office before the second horse has passed the winning post.

J. F.—The mail steamers of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Co. have sailed regularly for a great number of years, with the exception of the day mail on Good Fridays.

S. L. K.—The proper distance between the eyes is the width of one eye.

A. M.—When you write on one subject, do not enclose stamps for handwriting delineation in the same envelope. Keep them entirely separate, and mark your communication on the outside "Graphologist."

E. S.—When cabinet photographs first came out about twenty years ago, 95,000 copies of the Queen's likeness were sold in one year, but now 500 is a good sale.

Although it is considered a breach of etiquette to look behind one while walking, while riding a bicycle it is considered distinctly clever, if you are still on the bicycle after you have looked round. There are very few occasions, though, on which it is absolutely necessary to look round. As a rule, it is merely to satiate idle curiosity. However, this fact does not deter novelty-hatchers from bringing forth instruments for enabling one to take a back view. Among the best of these, consistent with the very modest price of a shilling, is the "Mirror Wristlet" issued by Garston and Co., of Queen Square, Aldersgate Street, E.C. There is little doubt that the article will become popular with ladies. They will find it invaluable for looking at the country behind them, to see if their hair is tidy or their hat on straight.

It is only to be expected that with the advent of the motor car the bicycle horse will become unpopular with the rising generation. Mr. Charles Clamp has recognised this in good time, and has invented a toy in which the locomotive engine takes the place of the wooden horse. The boy sits on a seat in the tender, and pedals the back wheels, while the steering gear is connected by rods with the front wheels. This gentleman is the inventor also of a water roundabout, in which ships take the place of the orthodox horse, and float round in real water. The engine works and shipbuilding yard are to be found at 67, Kitto Road, New Cross, S.E.

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On receipt of stamped envelope, a lady will send to all those afflicted, free particulars of a simple, harmless, and inexpensive self-treatment, which has permanently cured her daughter and hundreds of others of both sexes. Address, in confidence, Mrs. F. R. AUSTIN, 7, Addington Crescent, York Road, London.

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On receipt of stamped envelope, a lady who cured herself of Deafness and Noises in the Head, after fifteen years of suffering, will send to all afflicted free particulars of the Remedy, which is simple, safe, sure and inexpensive. Address—Mrs. C. E. AUSTIN, 7, Addington Crescent, York Road, London, S.E.

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A lady will, on receipt of stamped envelope, send free particulars of a new French Remedy, which permanently removes all Superfluous Hairs, destroying the roots *without injuring the skin*. Simple and inexpensive. Address, Madame "F. B.," c/o Fontaine et Cie., 1, Piccadilly Circus, London.

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A lady who in a few months reduced her weight from 16st. to 10st. 3lb. by a simple, inexpensive and harmless self-treatment, will willingly send free particulars of same to all who are sufferers, on receipt of stamped envelope. Address, Mrs. G. M. ELLIS, 26, Belvedere Road, Lambeth, London.

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A doctor's widow knows of a simple, inexpensive remedy that permanently destroys the roots, and will forward particulars free to all those afflicted sending stamped envelope.—Address, Mrs. B. D. WOOD, 179, Westminster Bridge Road, London.

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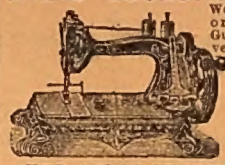

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Ladies desiring any improvement in this direction should send me stamp for particulars of a simple, inexpensive, harmless self-treatment, whereby a *full natural bust* can be obtained. Address, in confidence, Mrs. E. K. NORRIS, 7, Addington Crescent, York Road, London, S.E.

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They Hammer on the Hard Road.

"It isn't the hunting that hurts the horses; it's the hammer, hammer, hammer on the hard high road."

The noble sportsman who said this is sometimes a little careless about his "*h's*," and in quoting him I have taken the liberty of putting them where they belong. He won't mind that, I'm sure. As to his opinion, it is sound as a cocoa-nut. And there are other animals besides horses of which he might have said the same thing. For example:

"It isn't the working that hurts the men and women; it's the worry, worry, worry on life's hard high road."

But what is one to do? How can we stop worrying? On this point a certain writer says: "Don't worry, don't fret, don't let your mind dwell on trifles; observe the true proportions of things." Bright man! Let us tender him a vote of thanks. Should you ever consult him about a grain of sand in your eye he will say: "Oh, don't pay any attention to it." Excellent advice—for people with glass eyes. But how would he handle cases like these?

"Only recently," writes a woman who evidently knows what she is talking about, "have I recovered from an illness in which (taking body and mind together) I suffered more than I shall be able to set forth in words. It began in March, 1893. Without knowing why, I felt strangely. I was tired and exhausted, and had wholly lost my appetite. I ate a little, of course, but it appeared to do me no good. After eating I had a deal of pain at the chest, through to my back. There was a horrible gnawing sensation at the pit of my stomach, and for over three months I took no solid food. My flesh left me until I became so thin my acquaintances hardly recognised me; and I was so weak I could scarcely drag one foot after the other.

"But perhaps the worst feature of my condition was the state of my mind and nerves. My ambition was not only gone, but I grew so low-spirited and nervous that I didn't dare stay in the house alone. At night this feeling would be more intense and depressing. Sometimes I fancied I should not live till morning. Every subject presented its dismal and doleful side to me. I had medical advice and treatment, but no benefit came of it. Nearly a year passed in this way, when in February (1894) my mother persuaded me to try Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup, saying it had done her so much good under similar circumstances. I got a bottle from the Provident Co-operative Stores, Whitehall Branch. After taking it only a few days I felt greatly relieved; and by continuing to use it my appetite soon returned, my food agreed with me, and I grew strong and able to resume my work. (Signed) (Mrs.) Agnes Maria Hyde, 25, Devon Street, Darwen, Lancs., February 27th, 1895."

"In the early part of 1889," writes another, "I began to feel ill and out of sorts. I felt heavy, tired and weary in body and mind. I had a sour taste in the mouth, no appetite, and much pain and distress after eating. Rest gave me no relief, and I seldom got a full night's sleep. As time went on I became very weak—never being free from pain of some kind or another. The doctor's medicine did not reach the real seat of my complaint. For two years I suffered in this way. In March, 1891, I read a book about Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. I shall never forget the hope with which it inspired me. I got a bottle from Boot's Drug Stores, Bridge Street, and was wonderfully relieved by it. I could eat and digest food, and the pains decreased, and in a short time left me altogether. I have since had my usual good health. I now keep Mother Seigel's Syrup in the house as a family friend. (Signed) (Mrs.) Susannah Horne, 4, Beach Cottages, Mansfield Road, Rotherham, March 12th, 1895."

Most women fall ill from worry. It is hammer, hammer, hammer on the hard high road with them; an endless monotony of petty cares and vexations—all hitting the same spot on their brains and nerves. The disease that is bound to follow is the disease that came so near crushing the heart and life out of the two ladies whose letters you have read—indigestion or dyspepsia. That Mother Seigel's Syrup will cure the disease is a reason for profound thankfulness. But as for the *causes of worry!*—alas, I can suggest no remedy save courage, and hope in the good time coming.